THE North American Review

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SENATOR ABRAHAM RIBICOFF
on the Horror of Medical Costs

JOSEPH W. MEEKER
on Alternatives to Murder

LAWRENCE S. HALL
on Maine vs. the Oilmen

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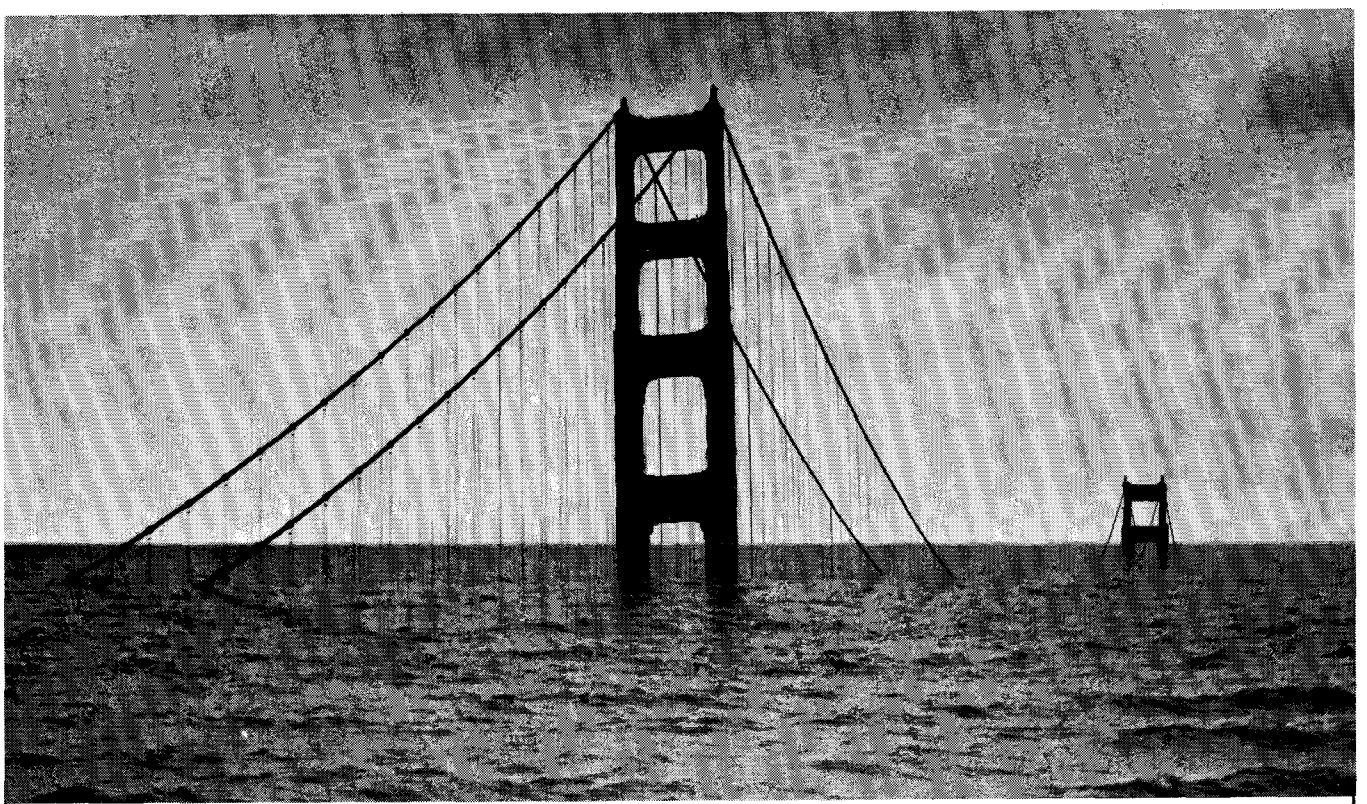

A probability report.

The Sierra Club doesn't say that our planet is likely to go under at any moment through our heedlessness. The composite photograph above merely depicts a possibility.

The probability is fairly remote.

Every day, however, we are making environmental changes with consequences we still don't understand or even suspect.

Take heat, for example.

Everytime we build a city block of high-rise buildings, we change the wind pattern so there's less wind to carry the heat away.

Everytime we heat or air-condition these buildings, use an electric appliance or light, drive a car or manufacture a product, 100% of that energy eventually winds up in the environment as heat.

And it's not only cities.

We know that when we clear a forest, the land beneath absorbs more heat. And this also happens when we plow fields, defoliate vegetation or take the life out of the soil. (One acre of grass, for example, has a potential cooling effect up to that of a 10-ton air conditioner.)

We are eliminating natural cooling systems and creating urban heat islands where the climate is hotter, rainier, cloudier, more humid and, of course, dirtier, too. These artificially created climates, called "microclimates" are already altering their immediate surrounding environment. And, if we create enough of them, we might alter the temperature of the entire earth.

One day as we approach the global heat limits, the polar ice caps could begin to melt, flooding some cities of the earth.

There are limits to the alterations we can make on our ecosystem. We would do well to slow the pace of change so we can determine these limits scientifically, before we discover them accidentally.

Sierra Club
Mills Tower San Francisco

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DED IN 1815
257/No. 3/Fall 1972

The North American Review

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Editorial and Business offices: UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA, CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613
Rates: $1.50 A COPY: $6.00 A YEAR IN THE U.S. AND ITS POSSESSIONS, $6.15 IN CANADA AND LATIN AMERICA—ALL OTHER COUNTRIES $7.00 A YEAR

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, Fall 1972. Old Series Vol. 257, New Series Vol. IX, No. 3. Published quarterly in March, June, September, December, at the University of Northern Iowa, 1222 West 27th Street, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. Second class postage paid at Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. Printed in U.S.A. by Woolverton Printing Co., Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. Copyright © 1972 by the University of Northern Iowa. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or of the University of Northern Iowa. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed envelope with return postage. **THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW** is indexed in SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES INDEX, INDEX TO LITTLE MAGAZINES, HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS, and AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE. Back file volumes are available from AMS Reprint Co., 56 East 13th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003, and from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. U.S. and Canadian national newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 155 West 15th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Subscribers must notify publisher of failure to receive within six weeks of date of issue.

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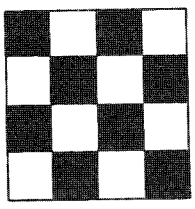
ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Larry Hall's critique of oil company operations along the Maine coast has had a history as checkered as the negative flag of its title. It was originally scheduled to appear more than a year ago in a yachting magazine called *Skipper*; then *Skipper* failed, was revived, failed again. Now "Hoist Negative"—updated and relevant as ever—has made its way into the NAR beginning on p. 3, and representing one man's fact-finding mission along one of this country's last unspoiled ocean boundaries.

With this number of the NAR, Joseph W. Meeker joins us as a contributing editor concerned primarily with environmental matters. (Note page 88.) Sensitive to his confession that "Hamlet and the Animals" had been rejected five times before it came to us—"twice by literary journals, on the grounds that it was too scientific, and three times by scientific journals, because it was too literary"—we agreed with Mr. Meeker that there ought somewhere to be a magazine whose view of "the environment" is an unprejudiced one.



Other autumnal editorial changes: Loree Rackstraw, NAR fiction editor for the past three-and-a-half years, leaves the masthead to re-acquaint herself with her family and her own typewriter. Stories she chose have been reprinted in both the Foley and O. Henry anthologies, and because her talents seem to us irreplaceable we haven't yet been able to face up to the hard prospect of appointing a successor. We will, of course, continue to publish fiction—more stories, we believe, than appear in any other quarterly in America. Richard Brook, formerly books editor, becomes a contributing editor with this issue. The NAR's changing attitudes toward the publication of book reviews are noted on p. 87.

Jonathan Holden, whose poem "The Summer of Snakes" is on p. 77, is this year's winner of the Devins award for a first book of poems.

Item: That other NAR, the *New American Review*, has recently changed both its publisher and its name. It will henceforth appear as the *American Review*, thus ending a confusion of acronyms troublesome only to a literate few.

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Lawrence Sargent Hall

Hoist Negative: Oil and the Maine Coast

There is nothing in the world like the fiords of Norway except the Maine coast. Yet already as I write this I realize I should either change the tense and say that up to now there *was* nothing in the world like the fiords of Norway except the Maine coast, or keep the tense, cross off "the Maine coast", and simply say there is nothing in the world any longer like the fiords of Norway.

This scandalous story is typical of what has taken place, is now taking place, and is eventually likely to take place everywhere there are deepwater anchorages and navigable shorelines. From even the fiords of Norway ultimately, to St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, the Great Barrier Reef, Stone Island off Machiasport, Long Island in Casco Bay, Hilton Head in South Carolina, West Falmouth at Cape Cod, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Prince Edward Island, Portland, Portsmouth, Delaware, Tampa, the Louisiana Gulf, and the beaches of Santa Barbara, the noose is tightening around us.

It was as a frail hopeful part of the desperate last-minute struggle to stave it off in Maine that the old ketch-rigged Banks dory *Maine Coaster*, veteran of voyages to Fundy and down the Mississippi, was made ready for one more cruise—a series of alarms in the form of excursions Downeast. The idea was to point up the full and pressing extent of a submerged and drifting death which, like icebergs, is nine-tenths concealed, and to rouse and mobilize seagoing sentiment against it. As a rallying signal *Maine Coaster* flew the international alphabet flag N—negative, to signify *no—no—no oil!*

The danger in Maine extends from Casco Bay where the spectacular coastline begins, north and east to Machias Bay on the verge of the great Fundy tides, and further as far as Eastport. *Maine Coaster* first flew her blue-and-white checkerboard flag at Long Island, one among several of the large and handsome Casco Bay islands with deep green woods and blond beaches, just outside Portland Harbor, which is already the second largest oil port on the east coast, second to New York. During World War II, squadrons of the Atlantic Fleet were fueled from the underground tanks of the Navy's 180 acre fuel depot on that island. Four years ago the abandoned depot was purchased from the federal government by King Resources Inc., who began preparations for a modern oil storage facility. To make possible that enterprise, the Portland City Council, its eyes fixed on the tax base with the myopic vision of most local officialdom, voted to remove the zoning restrictions standing in King's way on Long Island. Incredible though it seems, they acted less than a week after scientists had estimated that an oil spill at Portsmouth had caused damage from which twenty miles of the Piscataqua River will be twenty years recovering.

Meanwhile, under the lengthening shadow of a farsighted oil conveyance law, a site selection law, and an Environmental Improvement Commission established by the 104th Maine Legislature, King Resources went ahead with its preparations, painting and repairing a few buildings and stocking steel pilings, up to the moment when it became mandatory to apply to the Commission for a permit to begin the actual construction of a pier.

This was the Commission's first major challenge, and to its credit it denied the application on grounds that King's prospectus failed to provide adequate guarantees against pollution of the life style and value of the Casco Bay region. That historic decision took courage and foresight, especially in the face of the Commission's so-far discouraging record in the Maine courts. In the absence of environmental test cases to serve as guidelines the natural tendency of the courts has been to act as guardians of the letter of our law, however outmoded it may be, rather than of the character of our environment, however beset it may be by menaces lawmakers did not anticipate.

The reaction of King Resources was instantaneous and combative. Its vice-president in charge of the projected Long Island development argued angrily against King's being held to higher standards of anti-pollution than are existing operations not far distant. He thereby none too tacitly admitted that present procedures were inadequate and also that those King proposed were not at all what they could be and were not going to be any better than they had to be. Two spills washed onto nearby beaches during the period he was making his defense in the press and on television. Where he did commit all of King's horses and men, however, was to an assault upon the legality—not upon the desirability—of the Commission's ruling and, if necessary, upon the constitutionality of the oil conveyance and site selection laws on which the ruling was based. Thus he signalized his company's self-interested willingness to make use of any legalism to shove its opportunistic operations down the gullets of the people, their legislators and commissioners.

At this stage of a controversy described by headlines as "BITTER BATTLE LOOMS," *Maine Coaster* on a

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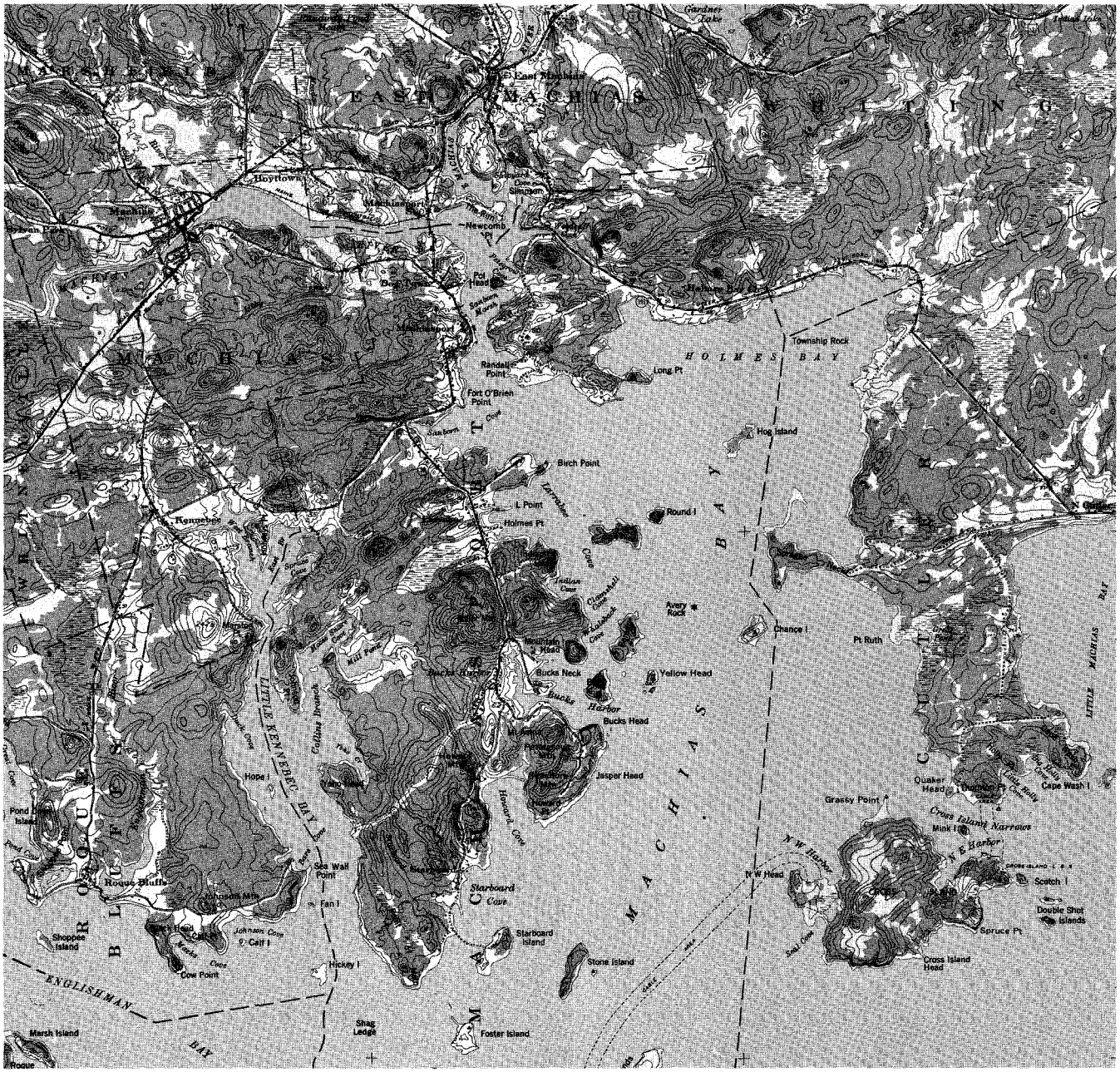
sparkling breezy day put in at Long Island and lay to the town float. Surrounded by ruins of the Navy's piers and jetties she flew the "negat" flag, snapping smartly at the mizzen-top, under the eyes of patrons of the island store and restaurant, and in sight of the skeleton crew who were manning the embryonic oil development now fully authorized in a decision on the King suit by the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.

All that needed to be said ashore was—"We're here to see for ourselves what all the oil fuss is about." There was no Yankee reticence in the lengthy explanations seasoned with what subsequent research showed to be spurious statistics. It was alleged that people on the mainland were the ones forming all the opposition to King's promise of the good life, although no one among thousands of summer residents on Long Island or neighboring Chebeague Island was found to be anything but alarmed at the possibility of oil near their sweet coves and beaches. It was claimed that the admitted risk of area-wide pollution by the proposed oil installation was worth the economic advantage to *twenty-five* families on Long Island. This was the islanders' own figure, and it was offered without embarrassment for the jeopardized living conditions of a thousand times that number of Casco Bay residents. Moreover it showed pathetic ignorance of the characteristic formula by which oil operators hire at best one-third of the original construction force from local unskilled or semi-skilled labor, then import special forces who, once the building period is over leave vacant premises, an automated plant, and anti-pollution controls that no engineering device can guarantee against the creeping death of continuous, inevitable, irreversible contamination.



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The islanders' deepest gullibility lay in believing the advance guard of "gentlemen" promoters, the smoothie troops speaking in altruistic clichés, whose avuncular blandishments persuaded local residents there could be no major petroleum establishment, hence no major menace, since the amount of land purchased by King Resources would not accommodate a large-scale operation. They believed this despite King's unpublicized efforts to buy up from summer residents additional properties on Long and neighboring islands. Like many other people they seemed not to suspect that you cannot, to alter one consonant of an old saying, let the camel's hose under the tent without getting the whole camel. Blank looks were a typical response to the inquiry whether everyone was not aware of the fact that the eastern seaboard from Delaware Bay to Massachusetts Bay was already soiled and spoiled by the broken promises of the oily gentlemen.

It was a depressing encounter with human fecklessness, and it was not to be the last. *Maine Coaster* left the site of Kingly ambitions, where a handful of men and a crane marked time until the outcome of the legalistic battle against the public domain by lackadaisically and inscrutably transferring a length or two of black steel pipe from one stockpile to another. Under "negat" she headed for the golden beaches on the northern and eastern face of the island.

By coincidence, on the following two days two of the most voluble and reflexive of the island apologists for oil had letters published in a Portland newspaper. The psychological seams all too clearly showed. Long Islanders never had had it so good as under the paternalism of Uncle Sam during the war. He employed them, he protected them, he built them a school. The present King Resources secretary-in-residence was a secretary for the naval facility, and she fondly recalls the dear old days before the base was deactivated, when no one had to leave the island to make a living. The federal government had offered the naval site to the State, but the State didn't care about the Long Islanders. The City of Portland also didn't care about the Islanders, didn't do anything when ferry service stopped one summer, wasn't willing to maintain the Island school since so many families had moved to the mainland for their livelihood leaving fewer than three hundred year-round residents. The Navy's buildings have gone uncared for, and been vandalized by goths, presumably from the mainland, whom the Islanders could do nothing about. Now the hapless Islanders are about to be adopted by another Big Uncle, who will care and will bring them people, progress, prosperity, and pupils for their school. And out there are all those mainlanders, who don't give a damn for the Island or its inhabitants, selfishly and cruelly trying to block the adoption.

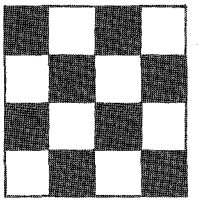
From such oil-pipe dreams it was a relief to put in at Chandler's Cove across the way at Chebeague Island, where boys were jigging mackerel, and later on to tow home to a golden beach on Long Island four young people whose motor had quit and stranded them on a bright and barren bar called Sand Island. It is not the oil operatives who are not to be trusted. On the contrary they may be trusted implicitly—to act with implacable commitment to their own best interests. It is people, who cannot be trusted to do even that.

Unfortunately there are those caught between oil interests and interests that are not soluble in oil. One group is the boating industry—yards and marinas carrying oil company signs and selling oil company products. The other group makes up their patrons. Yachtsmen are ambivalent about the power, scope, and unscrupulousness of the petroleum industry's submarine invasion of American waters. One bald reason is that many of them finance their afloat activities, as the commodore of an out-of state sailing club pointed out, with oil-stock dividends. Another is that yachtsmen are by definition pleasure-boatmen; their mental set in stepping aboard is to seek in the matrix of boat and water relief if not release from those harassments on land that, at least for the relatively short time they are afloat, they think by putting out of sight to put also out of mind. Only when pressed will they sympathetically, with faint sorrow, agree that the day may not be far off when they will no longer have even the sea to turn to for their esthetic gratification and spiritual convalescence, as Bryon did after viewing the rubble of Europe in the wake of the armies of Waterloo . . .

> Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!
> Ten thousand ships sweep over thee in vain.

Not any more they don't. One single tanker, sweeping across the very ocean Byron had in mind, can rupture, and spread its ineradicable stain for hundreds of nautical miles.

Yachtsmen prefer not to dwell on such things. Many of them shrug and take the view that time is in their favor, there is something that takes care of villainy, and anyway they will have had their fill of boating pleasure before the conditions of Los Angeles Bay, or even of Portland Harbor—where a spill is recorded on an average of once a week—are everywhere. They tend to forget during the periods of their own seagoing recuperation that they have a heavy obligation as today's stewards of tomorrow's cruising grounds. They are in every sense only passing in the night, and they forget that the posterity which follows them is going to judge and memorialize them by the legacy it is bequeathed. Here as in other instances present signs are that the judgment will be harsh.



On her way Downeast *Maine Coaster* did not investigate all of the alleged twelve mysterious deep water sites the petroleum industry is supposed to have designs on all along the coast. But she had passed most of them at one time or another. First out of Casco Bay to the eastward there is Southport Island, off Boothbay. It is generally known that an unidentified purchaser has been negotiating for all of the beautiful southern end of this island—that is, for Cape Newagen on whose tip the famous Newagen Inn has

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long been a prominent landmark to coastwise cruising. So far the negotiations have been highly secretive, such that one rumor claims the buyer is a conservationist organization; another, more elaborate, claims it is a petroleum developer disguised as a conservationist organization; and a third, more elaborate still, attributes the large scale real estate activity to the Mafia in the role of petroleum developer disguised as a conservationist organization. What is not secret is the fact that off Newagen are the coveted hundred-foot-and-more depths necessary to accommodate the new supertankers.

With this in mind, all you have to do is run a finger eastward on the charts, ticking off such possible deep-water locations as the east side of Damariscove Island, Owl's Head, the northwest side of North Haven Island, Babbidge Island to the east of Vinalhaven, Schooner Head south of Bar Harbor, the southern tip of Iron Bound Island off Winter Harbor, Schoodic, and finally the Jonesport, Machiasport, Eastport regions, to appreciate the charm of the Maine coast for an industry seeking open ocean ports for the modern leviathans too monstrous to be docked in the harbors of Maine or other states.

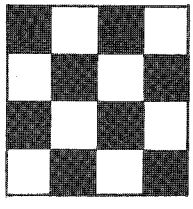
At Stone Island off Point of Main, Machiasport, where the depressed economy of Washington County lowers resistance, the invasion openly began. Atlantic World Port, Inc., which had already heavily invested in the necessary land options to swallow up the village of Starboard, had declared its intention, on the basis of two "environmental management" studies it had hired, of developing an industrial park around a tank farm and three refineries to be built by Atlantic-Richfield. Needless to say, profiteering in environmental "management" on so Antean a scale has polarized citizens of Machiasport, Machias, and Jonesport communities to a degree remarkable even in these times of polarization, and made the area a microcosm of the global throes the human race is going through in its Donnybrook over environment.

Atlantic World Port conducted a privately manipulated plebiscite, and managed it so as to come up with a majority vote in favor of oil. Today an interviewer is impressed by the number of people who say they have changed their minds as a result of facts they did not know and misconceptions they have since seen exploded. Merchants, insurance agents, and service people who are proponents of tank farms and refineries offer the easy rationalizations that the oil companies are so rich they're going to get what they're after anyhow, and anyhow they'll raise the standard of living of the economically deprived—by whom they say they mean the abject poor of Washington County. One of *Maine Coaster's* shipmates, a physician who in his capacity as Coordinator of Maine's Regional Medical Program had inspected the poverty households, says there is no question of their destitution, but he doubts that the advent of oil will bring with it the kind of jobs these poor are capable of holding—that where such jobs occur they will be insufficient in number, and that other benefits which may be indirect will only trickle down. Other industries would do better. But other industries are more welcome than oil elsewhere.

It might get rid of some of the flimflam if supporters of the petroleum industry could demonstrate that it does indeed raise dwellers in rural slums from their knees. However, existing examples support the opposite case. By what a labor official calls its "silent violence," oil instead lowers the quality of the environment, thereby encouraging the growth of a different and more comprehensive destitution—an exurban distribution of low level living, esthetic, moral, economic, and physical. Which is "development" all right—without progress.

But that is not the real argument. The coast does not belong to Washington County people, any more than it belongs to the petroleum developers, to turn to their own special narrow advantage. It is a natural resource of the state, the nation, and the world. And while people are important, *all* people are important present and future. Progress is important but not necessarily development, and it is important that *everyone* progresses. Automated economic and moralistic programs are not necessarily sound bookkeeping. For a comparatively tiny pocket of hostages to depression, the Maine coast, or any coast like it, is simply too high a ransom. A solution to their plight must be paid for some other way.

Inhabitants of the coastal villages, on the contrary, voted overwhelmingly against an industrial "advance" that would despoil their dooryards, their livelihoods, their native and iron way of life, as it is already despoiling those of the shrimpers in the Louisiana Gulf. They point to the hazards to oil traffic of frequent dense fog, fifteen-foot tides, strong and complicated currents, the necessity for a breakwater that will cause fishermen's mooring coves to fill with ice, the impossibility of pumping up spills that will drift into nearby shoal waters that provide the plankton that provide food for the herring that—well, without herring there is no fishing, there is nothing but oil. These people estimate that the first minor spill will put fifteen pounds out of business. And, unlike the Long Islanders, they seem not to have been attracted to such alternatives as the one offered by Atlantic World Port's president, who would provide fishermen with the alternative livelihood of using their boats to help clean up the spills that have wiped them out.



What is polarization among voters appears as schizophrenia in public officials and the leading Maine press (except the *Maine Times*). The disease has resulted in some feverish journalistic and political lightheadedness. Editors, columnists, and civil servants want both oil and water and are stymied because the two do not mix. Their predicament calls to mind an old ballad about two bluenose Irish sailormen who, needing an anchor line, set out to steal the belfry rope they have spied through the open doors of a seacoast village church. Though the rope is sacred and belongs to the

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parishioners, their need is urgent and practical, so they decide to go ahead. Knife in teeth, the one named Paddy climbs the rope hand-over-hand until he reaches the clapper. From this position, while his mate below urges him to hurry up and cut, he is confronted with a critical choice. He can sever the rope above his head—in which case he falls seven fathoms to the floor. He can sever it beneath his feet—in which case he leaves himself hanging aloft with no way of getting down on deck. Or he can just climb down and forget the whole deal—in which case, need it be pointed out, he and his buddy will have to go and find a rode line somewhere else. As allegory, this ballad touches the reality at many points.

In the aftermath of the Machias "referendum," newspapers hailed the majority vote in favor of oil as though it had been the mandate Atlantic World Port claimed it was, in spite of a large, critical, and totally committed minority whose vote they appear to have dismissed as insignificant merely because it was outnumbered. An editorial in one of Maine's largest dailies, reasoning from the assumption "there is hardly any doubt but that the oil industry is coming to Maine"—exactly the assumption of the speculator Atlantic World Port, Inc.—somehow contrived through all too typical processes of wishful thinking to arrive at the extraordinary yet popular conclusion that "Pollution is not a certainty, and the economic benefits to disadvantaged Washington County will be great." This "analysis" turns out to be more accurate upside-down so as to read: "The economic benefit to disadvantaged Washington County is not a certainty, and pollution will be great."

Not even the petroleum executives have been brash enough to deny that pollution is a fact of better living through petrochemistry. One of the reasons Maine has suddenly ceased to be a wallflower is that other states have come to demand pollution loads low enough so the difficulty and expense of maintaining their required levels is inhibiting the establishment of refinery complexes and driving the oil promoters to seek out less-protected locations. In an "Environmental Management" study of the Machias Bay site, the Arthur D. Little Company advised Atlantic World Port to allow for a continuing factor of "significant" 1000-barrel spills at the offloading pier and on occasion up to 40,000-barrel "major" spills affecting the whole Gulf of Maine. Though this study did not make a direct analysis of alternative locations such as Long Island or Newagen or North Haven or Eastport, it explains that it nevertheless had them in mind, and that its findings are comprehensive and applicable to comparable sites along the coast.

The president of Atlantic World Port himself, a self-styled "corporate adventurer" whose financial ambitions play hide-and-seek with political ones, has publicly recorded his acceptance of the fact of pollution: first by altruistically recommending better techniques and standards for *clean-up*—not spill-control, and second by altruistically recommending an "absolute liability" fund from the kitty of the petroleum industry in order that pollution damages can be "reimbursed" without obliging the plaintiffs to go through long and costly court recourses for "recovering" their losses.

As for the local economic benefits of petroleum, by the admission of this same executive, they are relatively inappreciable—in his own idiom, "a different order of magnitude" altogether. Asked how he felt about the industry's court battle with public control-legislation he frankly observed that a corporation executive's duty is to his stockholders, not the public.

Such recent inescapable insights have caused some breakdown in simplistic policies and attitudes without, however, so far jelling new ones capable of enlightened coping with the full complexity of the problem, or even of the definition of the problem. The early exuberance of Senator Muskie and Governor Curtis is now hedged with caution, though the head of Maine's Department of Economic Development is still gesticulating for the state to climb the belfry rope. So are a few die-hard editors and columnists who, unable to bear the thought that Maine youths should be obliged to leave home to seek their fortunes, would keep them here by the rope trick of creating the very industrial toxicity they would have them avoid elsewhere. Similar logic argues that Irving, whose name emblazoned on his six great tanks is a cruising landmark visible over forty miles of ocean off St. John, New Brunswick, already threatens the Maine coast only sixty miles away by offloading supertankers like the *H. J. Haynes:* therefore, unless Maine seizes immediate advantage she will lose the full opportunity of fouling her own nest. Actually it is more than *her* nest. If this sophistry does nothing else it calls for the involvement of national governments, and the Maine congressional delegation had better see to that involvement soon or they will all have to answer for future casualty.

An earlier sophistry asserted that oil already contaminates Maine waters, so why worry now?—as if pollution like pregnancy knows no degree. Lately, however, the more skillful sophists of the pro-oil press have resorted to the old red-herring—the only species of fish that may eventually survive along the Maine coast. To distract attention from the naive opinions they previously spread across their editorial pages, they are now adopting tactics to outconserve the conservationists. It is unfair, it is un-American, it is insufficient and disproportionate to focus on oil. The conscientious conservationists have only one honest course; they must direct their limited resources against all sources and kinds of pollution, all together, all at once. Why are Citizens Who Care launching an attack on oil when over the years they have put up with the nasty-nasty of pollutants which is sewage? Sewage is a threat to public health.

The general public and its officials have been slow to digest recent scientific testimony before the Conservation of Natural Resources Subcommittee of the Congressional Committee on Government Operations. Max Blumer, senior scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, testified before this subcommittee to the presence of cancer-causing chemicals in oil, which through water pollution will reach humans either through direct contact or through the life chain. He also testified that clean-up of oil spills is effective only if *all* the spill is

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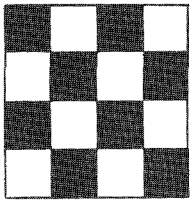
recovered *immediately*. Even petroleum executives who subscribe to "enforceable" standards indignantly cry "uncle" here on grounds that the technology for accomplishing this kind of recovery simply does not exist, and they doubt if it ever will, even though the spill problem may be partially solved by new and costly processes like jelling the oil. They should not be expected to do the impractical, let alone the impossible!



Underneath their rodomontade, which is the word for sophisticated bluster, lies the hard core argument of the oil magnates. At one press conference the president of Atlantic World Port stated categorically that the logic for an oil refinery on the coast of Maine is overwhelming because the demands for energy of our society demand the supertankers that demand the ocean ports that are in such short supply. But these snowballing logistics are only overwhelming to an oily brain that is guilty of shallow and polluted thinking about deep water. This engagingly candid young self-styled corporate adventurer cited the bogie of a fuel shortage in the Northeast in winter—a shortage that several cool-headed authorities later declared neither acute nor insurmountable. He dismissed atomic energy as an inadequate alternative supply. And he failed to mention the great potential source between the United States and Canada of clean hydro-electric power, which the oil industry and the oil-fired power companies have so far helped successfully to suppress. Several times during the conference he informed his audience that all the energy problems would be easy to solve if only the world could be made to stand still long enough to allow for a master plan; but quite literally "the facts change one-hundred-and-eighty degrees every six months."

This plaintive observation ultimately argues against itself. The case for oil would be deadly if it were not extemporized, and if there were no choices. But all present projections for petroleum development are interim. They are based on opportunism, expedience, and convenience; they consist of exploiting the quickest, simplest, cheapest and most remunerative facilities ready to hand. And they imply of their own implications that the limited numbers of natural deepwater ports are, by ever growing demands for energy, doomed to inadequacy before they are even set up, if not in the next six-month countermarch of facts, or the second or third, then by the tenth or twelfth. At such time, if hydro-electric and nuclear power have not yet taken over and oil is still king, it will be obliged to take the ultimate step being taken already in the Persian Gulf and Delaware Bay—a step that would now be in process all up and down the eastern seaboard if by act of nature or man the accommodations of the natural coast were to be withheld.

For an industry as well endowed as petroleum to rely on raw resources like natural deepwater ports in this technological age is as primeval as going back to the old mill stream. It should not be asked to cut back its operations; on the contrary it should be required to project them further ahead. If forced, it is perfectly capable out of its vast profits of *manufacturing* island terminals for loading and offloading tankers, for tank farms and even for refineries, out to sea in second-rate waters.

It is going to have to come to this eventually anyway. Why not now? Why?—because it has found a temporary alternative that is easier and cheaper. Meanwhile, along with local, state, and federal officials, and members of the press and general public who stand permissively and shortsightedly by, it will be doing all posterity an irreparable disservice if the premium seacoast is derelicted in the mere passing.

On September 8 and 9, 1970, Senator Muskie's subcommittee on air and water pollution held in Machias the first of a series of hearings whose purpose, according to Muskie, was exploratory—"to explore the relationship of economic development to environmental quality," to see, as his prospectus went on clearly to imply, whether and how on the Maine coast or anywhere else our laws and technology can make it possible for us in future to have our environment and eat it too. After two depressing days of erratically varied and divergent testimony, amid much putting-on, taking-off, and putting-on of eyeglasses, even the senator himself seemed no nearer than the human race has ever been to seeing a way to resolve this ancient paradox.

While talking a great game of ducks-and-drakes along the world's seashores, the oil companies did not dispute Sea and Shore Fisheries Commissioner Green's verdict that a major spill at Machiasport would endanger every cove and estuary on the Maine coast. Max Blumer once again cited the deathly facts of long-term fall-out currently disclosed in the continuing investigation by Woods Hole scientists of the devastating spill in 1968 off West Falmouth at Cape Cod. After its massive initial kill this 650-ton spill spread its blight over 5,000 acres of ocean floor in one year, and is still spreading. The toxic chemicals in oil do not disappear with the slick, but sink to the bottom where their damage is progressive and permanent.

Chairman Koons of the Environmental Improvement Commission testified that in Maine ten oil companies have joined King Resources in a court fight to get out from under the 104th Legislature's oil conveyance and site selection laws, of which his commission is the instrument. A pipefitter with his wife and baby informed Muskie at lunchtime that he would be forced to keep digging clams to support his family unless the petroleum industry came to Washington County bringing him pipes to fit—a bemusing variant of the antique theme of the mountain coming to Mohammed. Excited old men, retired economists and seacaptains, over-extended themselves in an effort to think young.

The impressive head of the Maine Lobstermen's Association charged public officials with the duty of bringing clean industry to the coast. Whereupon the Senator, without noting that some industries are cleaner than others

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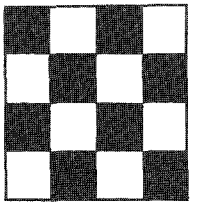
and more appropriate to the circumstances being considered, told the hearing there was no such thing as a really clean basic industry, and if there were, or if there were anything close to it, Washington County appeared to have no prospect of getting any of it. So embedded was this presumption, that a many-hundred-million-dollar projection, for expansion of the fishing industry and development of aquaculture and marine farming (made by the Senator's own appointment to Commissioner of Sea and Shore Fisheries) was called by the Senator "vague" and "futuristic," and was upstaged by a proposition of federal subsidy for an eighty-million-dollar breakwater, pier, and causeway set-up for oil.

The testimony of most local officials revealed them as already aloft, dangling from the bell rope in Paddy's dilemma, while the state's head of economic development waved them on from below to make the fateful slice and the Governor waited warily in the aisle to see what might be salvaged. The year before, under his sponsorship the state leased 3,300,000 acres of underwater shoal territory as close as seven miles from shore, for purposes of oil exploration. Now, after the Department of Justice has challenged the legality of the lease, he expressed hope for some state and national land-use laws to prevent developmental abuse.

Pro-oil testimony was flagrantly lacking in the kind of solid data that, for example, supported the aquaculture projections of the Sea and Shore Fisheries Commissioner. At no point were figures advanced in support of the haunting premise that petrochemistry would cure the local economic blight. Who might be expected to benefit, how, how much, and for how long? These questions went as carefully unanswered as the one, asked by the senator, about Occidental Petroleum's alternative sites on the Maine coast in addition to the ones at Machiasport and in the Perry-Eastport district. Occidental's chairman of the board declined to answer on grounds that he would be thereby disadvantaged in the predatory undercover maneuvering for locations. Instead, taking his theme from an old title, *Oil for the Lamps of China*, he floridly proclaimed petroleum as the fountainhead of civilization, meantime showing himself persistently ignorant even of how to pronounce the name of the town where he was testifying and on which he had had designs for over a year.

The vice-president of Atlantic-Richfield confessed under questioning that he had never seen the several hundred acres where his company proposed a "petrochemical complex" like the one it now operates in Philadelphia. Yet he was before the fact just as reassuring that the impact would not disturb existing villages as after the fact he will be indifferent to the vacuity and bad faith of his assurances. At no point did he invite anyone to behold his grisly model at Philadelphia, or so much as exhibit a photograph to indicate what he was holding in store for Machias and the Maine coast. A single picture showing an Atlantic - Richfield "environment" would have been worth more than a thousand words of testimony at this hearing.

In a rhetoric lubricated with premises, the premise with the highest lubricity was advanced by the vice-president of the Arthur D. Little Company. He contended that our land serves us best under programs of "multiple use"—that is, vegetable-animal - mineral - residential - industrial - recreational - piscatorial - explorational - conservational - developmental. In the new land of multiplicity the lion of development must be made to lie down with the lamb of conservation, and to keep him from starving the technology of management will convert him into a vegetarian, with the further guarantee against his then eating up all the vegetation in the fact that by appetite he will still remain a carnivore.



The Little premise is deceptively plausible. But ingenious though it is, it cannot answer the basic questions. Is the quality of uniqueness no longer viable, valuable, or supportable, and therefore will those features of our earth that are of unique quality serve us better, or only, if their uniqueness is broken into multiplicity? Mt. Rushmore? The Grand Canyon? The Allagash? The Norwegian fiords? The beaches of Santa Barbara? The Great Barrier Reef? How much and what kind of multiplicity is appropriate and beneficial? Does not some of our earth still retain such singular attributes as to serve us best, and perhaps only, in ways consistent with its very singularity? What are the reasons why a unique feature of the globe should not be left intact to serve as no other can—as an example of what nature did *once*?

Finally the conservationists, instead of asking these critical questions, fell along with everyone else for the false issue, and inquired: Why pursue uncertain benefits at the cost of certain liabilities? This ghostly query, which haunted the entire hearing, went unanswered, although at one time it seemed as if the Senator and the Governor agreed that oil operations ought perhaps to be postponed until the liabilities could be elevated to the same level of uncertainty as the benefits.

The real issue is not whether the assets, certain and uncertain, of oil or any given economic development can be favorably balanced through law and technology against its environmental risks, certain and uncertain. The real issue is whether any given economic development is compatible or incompatible with the ecological spectrum of the particular environment it will affect. On the Maine and comparable seacoasts it is whether petroleum development is compatible or incompatible with the indigenous circumstances and values, economic and other, of a vital, fragile, and irreplaceable natural resource. The hearings adjourned without even drawing this issue. Rather, their achievement appeared to lie in droning out the most certain and appalling prospect to emerge from sixteen hours of examination and testimony—that oil is well on its way to poisoning all seven of the planet's seas, and nothing short of a medieval crusade will stop it.

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Senator Muskie may eventually take a position, but it will be impossible, given the pseudo-option he has set up, for him to make a clean choice. Who can tell how many barrels of decent water one barrel of oil is worth? He has put himself in too political a quandary to be able to say, as Prime Minister Gorton of Australia has said to state officials and the petroleum industry regarding the threat of oil development to the Great Barrier Reef —"The slightest danger is too much danger."

And so, as of this moment, nothing much stands between oil and water anywhere—apart from some beleaguered statutes and government agencies—except people. People like those at Piney Point, Maryland, whose organized opposition has kept the slick operators at bay.

Maine Coaster ended her pilgrimage, and was hauled out, at Starboard Creek, Machiasport. She left her flag at the Starboard Village Community Center, an 1803 one-room schoolhouse which had been given over to a no-oil exhibit by discriminating young people not wishing to fall heir to the indiscriminate legacy of a civilization whose religion is energy and "development."

Ten months earlier the Maine State Planning Office had begun a coastal planning program to ward off "the chaos of single-purpose ventures and short-term advantages to individuals, individual corporations, and local governments." This program is scheduled to be completed by December 1973. Until such programs are in effect, the following measures should be taken to prevent chaos from winning the race:

—Jailing the petroleum promoters, corporate adventurers, and any public officials carrying their bag, who try to sneak in under the wire. This will have the beneficent effect of bringing their world and its shifting facts to a standstill long enough to enable them to think other than off the top of the head and deal other than off the bottom of the deck.

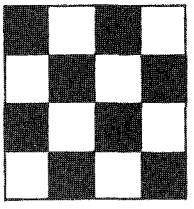
—Making the petroleum industry, which fuels public utilities, a public utility itself, subject to public utility controls.

—Requiring the federal government to zone the nation's seaboards for clean industry and, where possible and appropriate, for coastal and oceanic parks similar to the one on lower Cape Cod that in less than ten years has doubled the gross local product of surrounding towns, at the same time preserving "an invaluable piece of the American landscape."

—Persuading the next generation they should shift targets from the academy, which in spite of its shortcomings is the social institution most considerate of them, to the real enemies of what is going to be their environment.

—Hoisting *negative* against pillaging the choice green earth and blue water that have enriched past generations beyond measurement in megawatts and dollars. A needle and thread, some blue cloth and some white cloth will do this much.

The human race is going to live in exactly as much blight as it will put up with, for as long as blight will sustain it.



In the two years since "negat" was hoisted at Bailey Island, the spectre of oil has been haunting the Maine coast in only slightly altered guises. Some of the names have not even changed. One act reveals dramatically the extent of the petroleum industry's arrogant persistence. Counting on the small morning hours of a long holiday weekend, King Resources, having been denied a license to offload oil pending judicial determination of its case, proceeded stealthily to do so anyway under cover of darkness, and was finally stopped come daylight with a temporary injunction issued by a judge in pajamas to the alerted Environmental Improvement Commission. But the most significant event took place the following spring at Searsport, where the same operators who had been already turned away once from Long Island, New York, and later on from South Portland—Maine Clean[*sic*]Fuels —contrived to hang up the public and its officials for thousands of man-hours with an ill-prepared, evasive, cynically submitted application for an oil depot and refinery on Sears Island in Penobscot Bay. The application was denied by the same Environmental Improvement Commission that a few months earlier had finally lost its case against King Resources in the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, just as it may eventually lose others in the crucial test in court of the Site Approval Law of which it is the instrument.

Winter before last the oil industry cried wolf over a fuel shortage that did not occur; the next fall the president of Atlantic World Port, pursuing other ambitions, proffered his company's optioned acres at Machiasport to a conservation group. But while weary public attention, falsely lulled, drifted to different concerns, the undercover activities of the oil interests have still been going on.

Concurrently, Governor Curtis, who like Senator Muskie would like to do the statesmanly and right thing if somebody could settle what that is, appointed a panel composed of a "balance"—the new word for "conflict"—of interests to recommend some magic way to reconcile the controversial elements. It seems to be a reflexive assumption of the political mind that there is no such thing as irreconcilability and that the values of any controversy must be reduced to the neuter state of conciliation. The Governor proposes somewhere along the coast an "energy center" which would solve "Maine's energy crisis" and at the same time guarantee "absolute protection" (his words) for the rest of the coast! Along similar lines the leader of the Republican majority in the state legislature came up with a vulnerable blueprint, which his colleagues rejected, for a state owned, leased, and regulated "industrial port authority." At a casual glance this looks better than throwing the coast to the wolves. Unfortunately it does no more than dress the wolf in sheep's clothing. It is like trying to regulate the ill effects of alcohol by dispensing it through a state liquor commission.

Lured by these decoys, no one any longer seems to be asking the necessary questions. Question—What strange

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kind of "energy crisis" does Maine have when she has at Portland the second largest oil port on the eastern seaboard, and when she already exports more of her power supplies to other states and Canada than she consumes herself? Question—If she does this without refineries, who is to profit from refineries on her coast? Question—If it is the oil companies that need her shore facilities, more than she needs their produce, in order to accommodate their supertankers, why can't they be told what the governor of Delaware told Shell? Use smaller tankers!

Perhaps a fitting and ironical conclusion to the cruise of *Maine Coaster* lies in the great black globs that washed up on the doorsteps of Long-Islanders in mid-July, 1972. One-hundred thousand gallons of number six industrial heating oil leaked from a large tanker and came ashore initially on the beaches of Long Island in Casco Bay, instantly putting seventeen to eighteen hundred fishermen out of business. It is a brutal lesson in poetic justice.

There are further ironies in this spill which subsequently affected the coast almost as far south as the New Hampshire border. First, the Texaco company's so-called "clean-up" operations could have been more nearly adequate if the resources provided by Maine's Oil Conveyance Law had not been immobilized by legal action taken against that law by the oil companies themselves. Second, Texaco was forced to change its plans to have the "clean-up mess" bulldozed underground on a twenty acre site near Norway, Maine, when citizens refused to submit their environment to such use. At this writing the company is still trying to find an acceptable way to dispose of its multi-ton excretion. The third irony lies within a kind of linguistic trickery. There is no such thing as "clean-up" of an oil spill. Not all, even of the surface chemicals, gets "cleaned-up." But what is far worse, what everyone keeps forgetting that the scientists keep on telling them—there is simply no technology whatever for "cleaning-up" the deadly poisons that sink within days to the ocean floor, spreading their devastation along the bottom for incalculable miles, incalculable years afterward.

So the vital problem drags along bedeviled with unexamined premises, false logic and false hopes, subterfuge, inadequate research, plausible simplistic solutions, political and economic pressures, thwarted aims, untested laws, hidden bureaucracies, blurred definitions, propaganda, diversion, indecision, unimaginativeness, and short-term and predatory ambitions. The navigators who once found the coast of Maine so formidable are now the formidable. The threatened have become the threateners. They renew and strengthen themselves with each generation. While the coast is born to them only once. □

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Sponsor of one of several national medical insurance bills presently waiting for Senate consideration, Senator Ribicoff chronicles some of the nightmares of the present system (or non-system), and offers one possible solution. This excerpt is from his book, The American Medical Machine, *to be published in October by Saturday Review Press.*

Senator Abraham Ribicoff,
with Paul Danaceau

FIXING THE AMERICAN MEDICAL MACHINE

As I stand before you on this day of April 20, 1980, I recall the year 1970, and wonder at all the changes that have occurred in the past decade . . . . The public used to be aghast when prognostications of costs of $100 per day were made, back in the late '60s and early '70s. What would they say to today's average of $400 per day, even in rural areas, with urban areas as high as $950 per day, and still going up?

From a speech by the late Mark Berke, executive director, Mount Zion Hospital and Medical Center, San Francisco, April 20, 1970.

For the family of Norman W. Quynn, 64, a retired grocer from Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, the future came early—ten years and two months early. They had their $1,000-a-day hospital bill on February 16, 1970, when they received a $4,599.90 bill for the four and a half days Mr. Quynn was a patient at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. He was admitted at 6 p.m. on a Sunday night and died at 6:30 a.m. the following Friday.

Mr. Quynn underwent complex and extensive surgery for a bleeding ulcer that had hemorrhaged and for other stomach problems. His bill included the following items: room, $462; laboratory, $743; pharmacy, $114; operating room, $395; transfusions, $1,430; surgical-medical supplies, $321; radiology, $145; cardiology, $40; oxygen, $96; intensive care, $180; intravenous solutions, $139; breathing pressure machine, $20; pulmonary functions study, $60; albumin (a tissue-building substance), $320; other charges, $134.

The family was stunned by the size of the bill, especially since Mr. Quynn had previously spent the same amount of time in the local hospital at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where he had a kidney removed and received intensive care. The bill for those four and a half days was only $893, about $200 a day.

Other decades have become famous for scientific breakthroughs and advances in medical technology. The 1960s and 1970s will be remembered as the years when the sky was the limit in medical costs and nobody seemed to make much headway controlling them. In the 1960s alone, hospital costs almost tripled and doctors' fees nearly doubled. The average day in the hospital that cost $32.23 in 1960 cost $81.01 in 1970. The complete physical that cost $57 as recently as 1968 cost $100 in 1970. And six of every ten private dollars spent on medical bills came not from insurance programs but from the pockets of consumers.

More proof could be found in cities like Tulsa, Oklahoma, where medical bills accounted for 60 percent of all bankruptcies. Most involved young couples who had just bought a home, a car, and furniture. "You read through a lot of these cases," says attorney Ross Hutchins, "and you see things like a man owes Bank Americard $460. Then he owes the oil company $84. He owes the clothing store $185. The service station $30. The jewelers $25. And you say, 'Hell, that guy's problem wasn't medical.' Then you come to this. Pediatrics $104. Then you see he owes the hospital $195. Pathology laboratory $500. They'll let all the rest of those bills go bad because they've got a sick baby down there, and they've got to keep paying the money

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to keep that baby from being cut off without medical service and dying."

Or in Nashville, Tennessee, where Tom Moore, a consultant for prepaid group practice plans, has watched people lined up at a collection agency waiting to pay their medical bills. "They stand there, literally with their hats in their hands, paying off a few bucks at a time, promising to scrape up a few more next week," he says. "They're ashamed and fearful, afraid of missing a payment and afraid of change. It's an attitude of almost total servitude."

Thus, for millions of Americans, the symbol of medical care in the 1970s is not the Red Cross, the Blue Cross, or the physician's insignia. It is the dollar sign. It is also the doctor shortage, crowded facilities, and the devastating medical needs of the poor.

Even when they can afford a doctor, many people cannot find one. Nobody has kept count of how many thousands of towns, small communities, and neighborhoods have no doctor, but there are 134 counties in 36 states without one (according to the American Medical Association, which defines this as lacking "an active non-Federal physician"), and hundreds more with only one or two. When a town doesn't have a doctor, it tries every trick in the book. It puts up billboards, writes to medical schools, medical societies, and specialty organizations, advertises in medical journals, and builds a small suite of offices, which it offers rent-free, along with a house and a guaranteed income, to anyone who will come. When this doesn't work, they write to doctors in foreign countries, such as India or Colombia. And when even that fails, you are left with a town like Tilden, Illinois (population 1,000).

Tilden is one of 150 towns in Illinois without a doctor. Neighboring towns have them. One is so busy he won't see any new patients. The other can see only those who sign his daily registry before 8:30 a.m. The three doctors at a hospital five miles away are also overworked, as Tilden learned last year when an automobile struck a boy on a bicycle. He was rushed to the hospital, but all three doctors were out on call. The boy died the next morning. "I'm not a doctor and I can't prove anything," says Lawrence Campbell, the mayor of Tilden. "But I still feel that if that boy had immediate attention there might be some way of saving his life." Mr. Campbell himself took the boy to the hospital, waited fifteen minutes for a doctor to come, and then "got so mad I couldn't stand it so I just walked out."

That experience convinced the townspeople to buy a new ambulance, one with a two-way radio so they could alert the hospital. But it's a doctor they really want, and the odds are against them. "Doctors just don't want to live here anymore unless they're from small towns and want to return," says Mayor Campbell. (In January of 1971, another Illinois town, London Mills, which has a population of 759, abandoned its twelve-year search for a doctor and said it would sell the $30,000 medical building it had put up in 1960.)

Royal Oak, Michigan, is an average middle-class suburb north of Detroit. Most of its 90,000 residents own their own homes and make a comfortable living. The community has 100,000 telephones, 26 churches, 22 schools, 4 movie theaters, 3 hotels, 2 banks, 2 golf courses, and a daily newspaper. It also has a 711-bed hospital, which services a large portion of Oakland County.

Like everything else in the county, William Beaumont Hospital is feeling the pressure of the area's rapid growth. In March of 1969, patients waited six or seven weeks for elective surgery. By January of 1971, they were waiting eight or nine weeks. So much emergency surgery has been showing up that two or three days a week the hospital postpones previously scheduled surgery for another week or two. Sometimes as many as ten cases a day are rescheduled.

Though not life-threatening, these situations cannot be shrugged off as minor inconveniences. People who have steeled themselves psychologically for surgery often find it difficult to go through the whole process again. "Cataracts are elective surgery and can be postponed," says Dr. Ivan Mader, the Beaumont chief of staff. "But a patient who can't see wants to be able to see without having to wait first nine weeks and then two more. A patient who has suffered bad burns and who needs skin grafts on a regular basis, and who is sixteen years old, as one of our patients is, does not suffer any physical harm when his grafts are postponed. But it sure interferes with his normal life, and he shouldn't have to go through it."

Whatever affluent suburbs like Royal Oak lack in hospital beds, they are supposed to make up in doctors. That's what popular wisdom says. But it doesn't apply for that scarcest of all medical creatures, the internist and family physician. Established internists already work a six-day, sixty-hour week, are booked up as far as three months in advance, are not seeing any new patients, and often are forced to send regular patients with immediate needs to the hospital emergency room. (Some people devise their own methods for beating the shortage and the waits. An Orlando, Florida, contractor, who had waited for more than an hour in his doctor's office, began to take his own temperature. A nurse rushed out and whisked him into an examining room.)

"I don't see any real hope of filling the gap between patient needs and the ability of the profession to supply those needs under current modes of operation," says Dr. Mader, who is himself an internist. "I would guess that 40 to 50 percent of what I do could be handled by a lay person, and it's well known that even more of a pediatrician's time could be turned over to people who could take a medical history and perform screening-type examinations like blood pressures and cardiograms to determine normal from abnormal. Then the physician could take over."

Physicians' assistants would help reduce the doctor shortage by forcing physicians to redefine their roles and use their time more efficiently. If the idea catches on and receives major financial support, they could become a substantial medical resource—but not for at least another ten years.

But it is the poor who are the most frequent victims of the nation's medical shortcomings. Compared to them, most people in this country have a medical smorgasbord.

Clifford Breaux, fifty-eight years old, of New Orleans, a Negro, owner of a small restaurant, unable to work for a

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year, is an example.[1] He was one of 30 million Americans admitted to a hospital in 1970. He made it on his ninth try. His medical problems were congestive heart failure and extreme overweight. He suffered severe body pains, had difficulty breathing, and could not digest his food. But one hospital refused to admit him five times, saying its beds were full, and three others turned him down because he didn't have the $200 deposit required for uninsured people. Finally, his wife and brother borrowed the money and he was admitted. Thirteen days later, he was dead.

Mrs. Catherine Booker, forty-seven years old, also of New Orleans, a welfare recipient, is another example.[2] Her story is much the same. She had congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, and an acute and chronic asthma condition. Her sons tried to have her hospitalized nine times over a five-month period before they succeeded. One hospital turned her down eight times, again saying it lacked the beds. Another wanted a $325 deposit, which nobody in the family had. Then one night, gasping and semiconscious, she arrived by ambulance at a hospital that had refused her twice the same afternoon. She was admitted. But by this time she couldn't speak and had great difficulty breathing. An hour later she was dead.

There are many millions of Americans who go without any medical care or receive inadequate care because they are poor. They live in neighborhoods like the Del Paso Heights section of Sacramento, California, where there is no doctor for 30,000 people, or in the Kenwood-Oakland area of Chicago, where there are five doctors for 50,000.

In the absence of doctors, they turn to the most besieged medical facilities in the country: the overcrowded, understaffed, and underfinanced municipal hospitals. These hospitals often provide good care. But the potential for poor care is far greater here than elsewhere. Emergency-room waits of five to six hours are normal, and fourteen-hour waits are not entirely uncommon. Even when the care comes, it often lacks any personal touch or sense of continuity. An infant girl was taken to Jacobi Municipal Hospital in New York City forty-four times during the first nine months of her life without ever being treated by the same physician twice. Another emergency room felt so pressured it refused to treat nonemergency patients.

Being admitted to a hospital is no guarantee things will get better for them. Medical records are frequently lost and overcrowding is so severe that cardiac patients are placed in halls near the nurses' stations. "You come to this hospital and we're telling you somebody's going to take care of you," says Dr. Seymour M. Glick, chief of medicine at New York's Coney Island Hospital. "The fact is, you may lie in a pool of feces, develop an ulcer, septicemia [blood poisoning], and perhaps ultimately die because of inadequate nursing care."

What the doctor shortage is to those outside the municipal hospital, the nursing shortage is to those inside it. "If you have one registered nurse and she is the only one covering three hundred patients, which is quite common in municipal hospitals, then some patients are going to die," says Dr. Glick. "In an intensive care unit, there should be one nurse for each two patients. I know of one which has one nurse for eleven patients. One was a young person in his twenties whose tracheostomy tube, through which he was breathing, became clogged up with his own secretions. With reasonable nursing care, he should have been suctioned every hour. But by the time the one nurse could get to him, he was dead. He choked to death. They learned that at the post mortem. I know another instance where a patient's tracheostomy tube disconnected from his respirator and he died because there weren't enough nurses."

Even without preventable deaths, the nursing shortage results in some frightful situations in city-owned hospitals. A Los Angeles nurse says that when she is the only nurse for seventy patients she can check on her patients only once an hour if she has nothing else to do, which means that medications are usually given late, and sometimes not at all. When she is tied up with one patient who needs special care, she must rely upon aides who are not highly trained to tell her if other patients are in trouble. In her hospital, one third of all the medical ward patients are weighed daily, and the rest every other day. Because there is only one man to lift patients onto the scale, he begins at 2:30 a.m. so he can finish by breakfast. The maintenance men finish mopping the halls, loudly, at 12:30 a.m. At about 5 a.m., nursing aides begin taking temperatures in order to finish in time to pass out medications before breakfast. Thus, on a normal night, patients are wakened at 12:30 a.m., around 2:30 a.m., 5 a.m., and 6 a.m.

Then there are the rural poor, like the migrant workers. For them, medical care means driving fifty or a hundred miles to a hospital; crossing back into Mexico, where medical care is cheaper and "more humane" (these are United States citizens); watching infants run up life-threatening fevers because nobody has the $10 charged by the local doctor; and having a hospital say after childbirth: "You pay the bill or we keep the baby." Almost every child, says Dr. Raymond M. Wheeler, a Charlotte, North Carolina, internist who has followed the trail of the migrants, grows up with some preventable physical defect or disease. On one trip, Dr. Wheeler stopped at the one-room shelter where six children lived with their parents.

"On the bed lay a three-month-old infant," he said in testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor. "It was emaciated, restless, wailing, and occasionally pulling at a bottle which we soon discovered contained sour milk. There was no refrigerator in which to keep formula. The child had been ill for weeks, according to its mother, but at its last visit to the clinic, a day or two earlier, no medication had been prescribed. A very quick examination disclosed pus pouring from its right ear. We made arrangements for the child to have penicillin and individually packaged feedings of formula which the mother could not afford. I suspect we were too late, and I doubt if the child survived . . . .

"I remember vividly the shock I received when one young boy was brought in who was well-nourished and I

1. Unsigned affidavit of Clifford Breaux, in *Rosezella Cook et al. v. Ochsner Foundation Hospital et al.*, U.S. District Court, E. D. Louisiana, 1970.

2. Affidavit of Edward Booker, in *Rosezella Cook et al. v. Ochsner Foundation Hospital et al.*

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touched his skin—warm, soft, resilient—unlike any I had seen all day, and I called to the student with me to come and put his hand on that child in order that he might refresh his memory of what a healthy skin feels like."

This is part of the reason why, although the United States spends more money on medical care than any other country—more than $80 billion a year and over $350 per person (migrants receive $20 worth of medical care a year)—fourteen other nations do a better job of preventing infant deaths. Twenty years ago, only six nations had a better record. Forty of each 1,000 black male babies born die before their first birthday, nearly twice the national average. For Alaska natives, the rate is 56, even though deaths among American Indian babies have dropped 48 percent since 1955.

Poor housing and other environmental conditions contribute to infant disease and death. But poor housing has nothing to do with the fact that each year one million children are born to women who receive no medical care during pregnancy or delivery and sometimes both. That is strictly a medical problem. And when doctors are scarce, facilities overcrowded, and nobody in medicine or government assumes responsibility for coordinating the medical needs of children and their families on a community-wide basis, it is almost inevitable that infant deaths will rise.

Other countries, especially Finland and Sweden, offer free cribs or cash bonuses as incentive for prenatal care. In America, however, the poor often feel stigmatized by free care. "Doctors think you have to take their insults because they're giving you everything free," said one woman in describing the care she and her infant had received at an outpatient clinic. "I sit there, looking at the dirty walls, and wonder why I'm there."

All any patient really wants is some assurance that he will find a doctor when he needs one, that he will receive high-quality care at a cost he can afford, that his rights as a consumer will be respected, and that none of this will depend upon his job, his income, his neighborhood, or the color of his skin.

Whether he receives such assurances, though, is a matter of pure luck, because most of this country's medical care systems, such as they are, have been organized more for the convenience of the providers—doctors, hospitals, and insurance carriers—than for the needs of the consumers. No matter how frustrating this has been to those providers who want to improve medical care, it is insignificant compared to the hardships suffered by patients. For it is the patient who is the ultimate victim of the fact that medical care in America is a private business and not a public responsibility. It is the patient who goes without medical care. It is the patient who receives inadequate medical care. It is the patient who comes to believe that medical care is a luxury and that "most doctors don't want you to bother them" as nearly seven of every ten did in a national poll reported in 1968.

Just finding medical care can be both a mystery and an endurance test for even the most sophisticated consumer. He never knows what will happen at any point along the way and usually winds up going to at least five different places. He must find a pediatrician for his children, an obstetrician-gynecologist for his wife, an internist for general medical problems, a general surgeon whenever that is required, and perhaps a specialist or two. When an emergency arises, he forgets about all of them and heads straight for the hospital. If people had to go through that to get their automobiles serviced and repaired, they would take to the streets in protest. But they accept this as normal for medical care.

Staying clear of back-breaking medical bills also is more luck than anything else. Where a man lives, works, and how much he earns—rather than any personal feelings he might have on the matter—usually determine the kind of medical insurance he and his family have. If he belongs to one of many unions for whom medical benefits follow right behind wages as a bargaining point, he has less to fear. But if he has nobody to organize and articulate his medical needs, he can wind up paying $20 of his $400-a-month-salary (before taxes) on insurance that is limited to $400 for surgery and $40 a day for a hospital bed.

Once he is in a plan, he learns about the small print. Twenty-one of seventy five Blue Cross plans, according to the most recent government survey, still do not fully cover laboratory services. Radium therapy, so important to cancer patients, is covered in full by only six plans and not at all by fifty-five. A dozen plans don't cover blood transfusions, and another twelve cover them only partially. Twelve more don't cover X-rays, six cover them partly, and sixteen occasionally. Commercial policies often reject maximum limits that are more favorable to consumers and pay on a piece work basis instead. One policy allows $10 for X-rays that can cost as much as $40; $15 for oxygen, which can run as high as $100; and $25 for blood transfusions that often cost $50.

Waiting periods between the time a person joins a plan and the time he is eligible for some benefits take another bite out of the security the consumer thinks he has bought. Colorado subscribers suffering from gall bladder problems and ulcers of the stomach have to wait eleven months or foot the full cost of the bill themselves. The New Hampshire-Vermont plan won't cover hernias, varicose veins, or any female genital problem for nine months. Full maternity benefits do not begin in fifty-eight plans until *after* nine months, and sometimes ten, have passed. Infants are not covered in ten plans until they are two weeks old.

Applied to the nation as a whole this means that one of every six people under sixty-five has no hospital insurance, the basic ingredient in any insurance package. That's 30 million Americans. One in five is without surgical insurance (35 million). One in four is not covered for extra in-hospital medical expenses, such as doctors' visits (46 million). Half the population has no X-ray and laboratory insurance outside the hospital (89 million). Roughly the same number of people are unprotected against the rising cost of prescription drugs (85 million). And 90 percent has no insurance against dental expenses (164 million).

In short, the consumer is left at the mercy of a profession (medicine) and an industry (hospitals and insurance) that answer only to themselves, and of a marketplace that

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cannot effectively guarantee that his medical care needs will be met, both in terms of actual services and financial protection against the skyrocketing cost of care.

Patients who must deal with this system, which means almost everyone, are not interested in learning what American medicine has accomplished for them in the past twenty-five years. They just want to make sure they don't become its victims in the next twenty-five years.

* * *

Basically, our problem seems to be that we expect solving social problems will be like manufacturing automobiles or sending a man to the moon and back. Social change is not the assembly line writ large. It is not a matter of laying out all the parts and putting them together as the conveyor belts move our way, so that, at the end, we see exactly the product we expected to see, and it works just as we expected it to work.

Social change is much more complicated. And the lesson we need to learn is that rarely do we get the kind of "comprehensive" results we always say we are after, that shiny new package with the chrome and trimmings. More often than not, we settle for something less, because, in the first place, that is the nature of the political process, and, in the second place, that's how social change comes about. It comes in bits and pieces, pushes and shoves, nudges and bumps, through what the sociologists call "marginal" change.

That means social change requires a political maturity we evidently do not have and a staying power we wish we didn't have to have. It means there is no end to the process of solving social problems. They always continue to exist, sometimes in their old context, sometimes in a new one. For a nation that is impatient to keep its date with destiny, that is a hard fact to accept. But at this point in our history, we might be far better off to worry less about that date with destiny and concentrate more on our rendezvous with reality.

But where do we start?

We really don't have much choice. We start with financing problems, the national health insurance question. That is the issue that pushed medical care off the back burner to begin with and turned it into a topic of national importance.

In one sense, we are lucky. At least a dozen different bills were introduced in the Congress during the past few years dealing with various methods of financing medical care, or portions of it. They included bills that originated with such organizations as the American Medical Association and the Health Insurance Association of America, the insurance industry's spokesman.

It is easy to discount these developments as nothing more than special interests trying to block important reforms. It's more than easy. It's downright tempting.

But as somebody who went through the Medicare battle with the AMA in the early 1960s, who listened to and often was the brunt of some of the more hysterical and vitriolic comments put forth by that organization and its members, it is refreshing to see them at least propose a program, even though it is the weakest of the lot (it provides for tax credits for the purchase of health insurance by the affluent and purchase by the government of private health insurance for the poor).

What's more, one of the better ideas for reforming American medical care has come not from government, not from any radical reformer, not from liberals in the House and Senate, but from the American Hospital Association. It calls for the establishment of health care corporations that would be directly responsible for the health of a specific population group. Though its financing mechanism is a complex, Rube Goldberg type of arrangement, and though it carves out for the hospitals of America a much more dominant and autonomous role than we might like them to have, the idea, which builds on the success of the prepaid group practices, is one we cannot afford to pass up. We may not yet know how to make medicine directly responsible for the health of individuals. But it is the kind of objective we ought to pursue with all our energies.

There are also bills introduced by President Nixon and Senator Edward M. Kennedy. The Nixon bill would establish a system of national health insurance setting federal standards for the private health insurance purchased on the open market. The Kennedy bill proposes a national health insurance system that is both financed and administered entirely by the federal government.

In the current economic climate, there is a certain attractiveness about the Nixon proposal, or any others that focus on shoring up the existing insurance system and using federal dollars to cover those areas where the need appears greatest. They call for less public spending and obviously would create the least disruption to our traditional arrangements and institutions.

Another idea with immediate appeal is to hold everything in limbo for a while and settle for something less than national health insurance, like a package that includes coverage for catastrophic illness, improvements in Medicare and Medicaid, and perhaps something in the field of child and maternal health.

But if we want to make medical care a *right* in this country, a right in fact as well as in principle—and that is what our goal ought to be—than we have only one choice. We must move as quickly as possible toward a federally financed program of national health insurance. The program should establish a system of universal entitlement, one program for the entire nation. It should be open to everyone without exception and have no restrictions on the medical services that are covered or the length of time a person may receive the medical treatment he needs.

Perhaps medical care never will be a right in this country, not in the truest and fullest sense of the word. For we are never going to have enough money or manpower to place a major medical center in every neighborhood, town, and village. The family living in a remote area of rural America will always be at a relative disadvantage compared with the person living in the large urban centers. But certainly the least we can do is to make it possible for everyone in this country to seek out and receive medical care with the same sense of entitlement, so that the migrant worker can go to a doctor or enter the hospital with the same sense of

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security and dignity as a United States senator, and so nobody in this country ever has to worry again about collection agencies, hospital attorneys, or bankruptcy courts.

A national health insurance program of this kind might not alter the actual practice of medicine in any dramatic, sudden, or sweeping way. We could pass this program tomorrow and have no assurances that we will see radically different patterns of organization and delivery or that there will be any major change in the provider-patient relationship. These can only occur over time. Yet it is absolutely essential for us to understand that in order for these changes to even *begin* to occur, we must first change our entire frame of reference with regard to the financing of medical care. And that requires a policy decision first, and a program second. The policy decision must be a commitment to make the health of the American people public business, a commitment that nobody in this country is going to go without medical care or fear medical care because he lacks the money. When seen in this context, the two major objections to such a program, though serious, are not insurmountable.

The first is that it is simply too expensive, that it will cost anywhere from $70 to $100 billion a year, and that, in the current economic and political climate, the Congress just isn't going to adopt that kind of program. That may be true. But whether the Congress adopts it or not, the people of this country are still going to be spending the money. So the price tag is a false issue. The real issue is whether we want to count these billions of dollars as public expenditures, whether we think the people of this country can best be served and protected by purchasing their health insurance through the private market, with its fragmented coverage, its limited regulation, and its lack of accountability, or whether we think that a federally funded program (though not necessarily federally administered, as Senator Kennedy proposes) is the best hope of achieving the equality that we seek.

The second objection is that it is too much too soon, that we need to make improvements in other areas before taking such a major step in health insurance. We need to turn out more doctors and more paramedical personnel and drastically overhaul our current system of organization and delivery. Desirable though that may be, it might just be the one way to ensure that we will *never* have national health insurance. It is the traditional argument of the providers of care: let's have only that amount of change we are willing to tolerate, and we'll tell you when we're ready. That is not good enough. The providers can always accept more than they say they can. We are going to have to gamble on this issue. And the gamble is that once the federal government commits itself to paying the bills, it can no longer afford to be as casual about costs as it once was, as vague about the development of medical manpower, as haphazard about new forms of organization and delivery.

I am not arguing for perfection. I fully expect that once we have a program of universal entitlement, we still will be faced with problems of cost, distribution, and delivery. But assume this country did nothing more than pay the bills and institute some cost controls and professional accountability. Assume that we financed this system through general revenues, with each taxpayer paying according to his ability to pay and not according to the amount of care he received or needed. Assume that the man who is making $10,000 a year no longer pays the same monthly amount for health insurance as the executive making $60,000. Assume that heads of families in this country no longer have to face the fact that if they lose their jobs during tight economic conditions they will also lose their medical benefits. Would we call that a failure, or not enough? We might say either, but we shouldn't.

Every country that has moved to a program of national health insurance has done so pretty much within the context of its traditional political system.

Sweden, with an extensive history of local autonomy dating back to ancient times, has some twenty-five provincial or county councils that are legally responsible for providing hospital care for its citizens. More than that. Health care is one of the principal purposes of local government. Much of the Swedish hospital system came about as a result of the initiative of these local authorities. There is a National Board of Health and Welfare, responsible for nationwide planning with regard to the scope, direction, and general expansion of health care services, including the supply of doctors and other trained personnel. But the actual business of program administration is done at the local or county level.

Canada, the country that is closest to the United States in area, diversity, and government structure, went the same route. The federal government passed the basic legislation, but the actual plans, and even the decision about whether to participate, was left to the discretion of the ten Canadian provinces.

While it would be a mistake for the United States to permit the fifty states to decide whether they wanted to participate in a national health insurance program, or the extent to which they wanted to participate, there is an important lesson here. It is that many national health insurance programs are not as centralized as we think, that it is entirely possible, and perhaps even desirable, to have centralized financing with decentralized administration.

Personally, I have always doubted the wisdom of a national health insurance program dominated as thoroughly by the federal government as the current system is dominated by the decisions of the private marketplace. I have doubted that such a program would have the flexibility to adapt to regional and local differences, that it would be responsive to the complaints and problems of individual patients.

Instead of turning the whole program over to the federal government or the private insurance industry, a wiser course would seem to be to let each state make its own decision on how the programs ought to be administered. The governor and the legislature could select whatever agency they wished to do the job. They could choose a Blue Cross carrier, a commercial company, a combination, or an existing state agency, or they could establish a semi-independent public corporation. The choice would be theirs. But the program would have to meet federal

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standards of entitlement, administration, cost control, and quality control.

At a mimimum, federal standards should include uniform budgeting and reporting systems so that the performance of the states, the administrative agencies, and individual institutions, such as hospitals, or medical foundations that contract to provide services to a specified population group, could be compared, monitored, and evaluated. In the same context, the performance of individual practitioners ought to come under much greater scrutiny. Any state would be free to change its administrative arrangement at any time. The federal government would have the power to move in and administer a state program itself if the state failed to meet its obligation and responsibility. That should occur only as a last resort.

A joint federal-state health insurance plan, with the federal government collecting the money and setting the standards, and with the state government administering the program and assuming the responsibility for meeting the medical care needs of all the people in its jurisdiction, is not the perfect solution, or the ideal institutional arrangement, mostly because there are no such entities as perfect institutional arrangements. No matter what system of administration the country chooses, we will still have the same employees for the most part. The expertise gained by people who worked for private insurance carriers or Blue Cross plans is not going to be squandered on the theory that we can start from scratch with another set of experts. Whatever biases they have they will continue to have or, similarly, whatever freedom they lacked to adopt a more publicly oriented course they might have in a new setting.

By allowing for regional variation and experiment, by allowing for continual review and at least the possibility of somebody else taking over the system, by allowing the health care issue to be politicized to the point where a governor would have to run for reëlection on his administration of the program, concern for satisfying the consumer would be heightened.

First-rate medical care should not be the exception in this country. It should be the rule. □

C. G. HANZLICEK

MIRAGE

The scrape of my feet is an alarm
The lake tips its mirror
Pours its silver into a canyon

A light wind shimmers the sky
Like a sheet of foil

A man who can drink light
Drink silver
Can stomach anything
I confess now my love of water

The cactus army
Throws up its arms in surrender
Waves a flag of vultures

Without knocking a pack rat
Walks through the door
Of a snake

Without knocking
I walk all day through myself
Yesterday I was here
About tomorrow I've said too much

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A STORY BY BESMILR BRIGHAM

THE CATHEDRAL

I: The Fair of Uncounted Days

Helen had ridden three days on a Mexican train across the Isthmus from Yucatan, but she missed Paul—who had shipped his car south from Tonala. As workmen who had loaded the vehicle from the railroad station told her. "A *veinte* of days, a hand full of time," they said; which could be any number. (How bare the town looked, hot with dry dust that first day they came into it together.)

So different at night and on this night, just before the turning of years. From the ancient Uayeb, a new fifty-two count cycle breaking the century. When all human and animal-earth creatures crept from their hiding places, crawled out of heavy scented dens (from coast swamps, fishermen and their wives, and from grass huts, their patch fields), to swarm with glittering and feathery wings about the center altar, the spreading square park. The great living swung-in-space *feria*, aisles of the fair.

A modern hotel built, but she went to the old *hospedaje* they had stayed in, just off the *zocalo*. Watching across the long wooden balcony, spread bare down into the flared-wide color charade, wheels swinging and circular globes that lighted suddenly; the crisp light floated against the still upper-row of rooms. Held in echoes from side-street stalls covered in canvas, bright with *carbón* braziers on the ground, tables where food was served. Dim and flaming bulbs under the canvases made the faces look phosphorescent.

When sudden rocket bursts of light shone into her room, the very walls held hard as a reflection; the dull flat red areas stood, oblique rectangles of paint, then quivered watery as fireworks went up of sulphur and resin. (She had seen the little *cohetes* laid out like irregular sticks of brush, wood that children went into the hills for—rolled and tied, wound together, held with strips of split vine, hollow tubes of bark and tamped-in sulphur. Poles to make a glittering fire.) Set high in dashes of sound, they broke their feeble matches struck above the squat roofs, quickly swirled back to earth, in shatters of stiff dead leaves. Blown particles burning.

The red-ash cinders floating over riders on an uneven wheel. That swung out from near under-columns of the big house, swerved in precarious gaudy whirls; a gyration of carts raising to almost touch and pass the suspended porch edge. As out from the spokes, girls in bordered-band dresses flirted high above the jutting roof beams, skidded and went roaring back down under glimmering branches of trees,— the badly balanced device pulled by a truck its motor racing; the girls held out their paper ticket *billetes* to the man moving from spoke to spoke, straddling the spindles around and around the undulating disc.

From all over the park dry pods dangled, hanging in masses from the trees, transparent as papery-droop lanterns people in their board houses put candles in. Hulls full of small red wax-beans, tiny seeds that broke their shells and spattered. (Flowers that grew, in reds and purple and fade-blues, clear as a summer sky. She could see the flowers they came from in designs traced on the wide-skirt dresses the girls wore, and on thin blouse yokes. Thrown with dripping fingers against wet clay of pots and bowls, baked

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BESMILR BRIGHAM, of Horatio, Arkansas, has had both poetry and fiction in earlier issues of the NAR.

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in the sun, stacked for sale in stands under the brief weather-sheets hung attached to building walls; the white covers shone strange as blooms, gifts of the earth on this hot night, threads of color sewed into them, coming up out of the cloth.) And she thought of Paul, driving lonely in his old car, sleeping or cooking by a campfire, as they had done. Then a man would walk up, big open face, carrying a machete. They would talk until the fire went out; he would roll up in his tarpaulin, she would never see him again. If only she could sleep as he did! not aware of the stars that could reach down and pierce the heart out. Somewhere in upper Guatemala, Huehuetenango, as far as he could go. Following the road to Zacapa, route of Insurrection, off on some weird hunt.

(Love was of the body, it moved as sleep and uncalled for; yet how she was whirled by her feeling that gyrated until she lost herself, as the riders were that whirled on the unnatural power-pulled wheel. A movement, drawn from the outside; she wanted to put on her jeans, sit at a stall her face dark, Indian dark, wish that with some instinct her blood would go back and find itself—a stillness, and be what it was.) The fair moved outward to a point beyond any light and where there was no light, the town enclosed about from the close shut-off mountains, solitary, set briefly alive in a narrow circumference. Already past two in the morning. Tables in the open drink stands and palm-covered ramadas stayed lined with faces; the solid pink stained squares of ice kept being chopped away and melted, poured over with yellowish liquid, papaya and orange, the pale beat-up pulp of the fruit *tamarindo.*

People, dull with pulque and food, waited for morning. At last from the park they would go, drowsily into the night, winding among sleeping booths down alleyways to *barrios* of the village, gay with their sweet *alcols* and soft warm beer. Girls and men no longer walked in separate directions on the wide flat stone thoroughfares in the park, but found their way together into the dark toward love. (Following the little bands that marched, musicians with brass and flute, carnival bands that went singing with one another. Drunk with light, they moved into the dark. Or singly the players came, beating their skin drums and blowing the crisp horns, wind clarinets and saxophones. Through the glistening portales as Helen came in, a man passed—shaking the painted gourds filled with a lonely shift of the maraca beans. All came and moved from her—their sounds echoed with percussion and wooden drums, beaters tipped with rubber, and primitive rasp instruments, the African big marimbas above their sad high songs.)

As though the streets unwound, ran down in their gaiety, noises cleared into music, men from town orchestras playing the violins with soft blue tones, and clear bog ambers. (They unwound sleepy and lax with love, shifting through the diminishing night, bodies following sharp fiddle strums, weaving as their slow feet lifted, stumbling against walls and building sides, under balconies. They lay down together, breath close in doorways to the closed market shed, lips sticky and touching in the resonant viola strings. They were open mouths singing in the night, stained and green faces, hand-painted masks chalked red with black curled-mats of hair, faces green in the lights and stiffed-over plaques of faces, shiny and made sharp,—a rough bright shell. Beetles that shone with polished shells made still and no-longer-living in the unmoving grass.)

As from the center square, opening up into the outer air space, thick and smelling of mangoes—, a long-stem flower lifted. Let loose, a dangling string on a kite, its soft fluid stem floated with the trees, then above them the string cut, opening to petals that slowly unfolded from paper. A big full bloom, bursting from wax and crepe. Signal for the *madruga* that day was near, or that the fair was not yet ending—leaves and blossom held diagonal, not caught with wind . . .

The posts on Helen's bed stood straight as upside-down legs, still and reflecting against the wall. Rose just short of the ceiling, seemed to be from some heavy beast thrown to the shadow on the floor; the legs held a too-regular uniformity. In the thick sealed-air, she watched the wooden shutters move, a light wind beginning to shift down cool. Voices, thick from the *zocalo* and lower portions of the rambling house, lifted drunkenly through the door vents. The hall-opening to the balcony shut for sleep. Deeper in color, a sleepy orange filled with a dark that pulled away from her, enclosed the room. (Remembrance like a city distant, strung up in Christmas tree lights; the strange North city where she had lived with Paul. Winters there, a frugal awareness—that moved in obscured stops of color, tubes of green and yellows, the perpetual opening of false light and man-made stars. That had never grown up out of the earth or touched the earth, but extended straight down from a not-distinct dense sky covered with swirling drift snow; the snow fell between canyons of glass and concrete, hard mountains of shadow dripping cold light, so that all the earth-held world was cold. Only the body in bed kept its dream of heat.)

That had warmed again with the unrealness of creatures and a race strange as open-range animals, who believed in an old passage of time, transposed representations of Quetzalcoatl, weird snakes and held-near gods that crawled out where there was no cold; animals, with ancient thick symbols and blood, that looked down from the hills, from stark river drains, ledges and peaks. The summits where a Divinity lived that one could not see. Earth-bound in belief, live things that woke, and came without sound, crawled away while yet it was dark into their concealed lairs.

A snake that crawled from rocks, high in fog-thick tips of the crater ranges, emerging from volcanic beds—scaled in feathers. The snake coiled into the air, and when it moved below above the hot plain, as from four directions that melted the mist of cloud bank, slowly drifted forward until it hung and its recognizable shape showed above the net of alleys and streets. (The face of a god carved out in the mountains, the *cumbre*, heights that she had read about. The god's eyes had been of unseeing stone. A face that stood naked, consumed itself in rock revealing nothing. God always lived in the mountains. Suspended in animal sleep through those beings left with lidless eyes. Its replica she knew was stone.) From peak of the market, the snake god of Kukulkan with half-shut eyes and sensuous

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nostrils, that bound itself among the openings that let in air. She had seen it lying flat on water pipes that rose warm, a singular pattern of ducts flowing with chill water that fell from where springs were, down into the town. Arroyos of white rock among darker barren formations. She saw in the non-Spanish retentive faces, as though the super-Natural lived with them in their houses.

Until it came to rest on the moving layers of Helen's room, she felt abstract about it, a little live snake that waited among the dilating strips that closed her windows, with straight movements shifted to the very solid red of her wall. For awhile, the animal stayed there, quivering in tediousness out from the intricate angular box into the paler ceiling. Then the body drew up within the melancholy form, covered with blunt scales, curved slow in perception without support and settled on her sheets. (She turned her face toward the low brilliance and the head was alive, immersed in sleep; she raised her hand feeling against the keen skull structure, touched the less-lustrous under part of the neck. Like a fish she had seen that grew feathers, picked up on the beach at *Boca del Toro*, the Bull Mouth river. She had taken the specimen to a museum. Her fingers slipped over the throat.–)

Once she had held a lizard, a tiny horned being that reared in her hand, standing with sharp bleak eyes and scar-head; the lizard looked at her with a clarity, low in its point of fear, pushing its claw feet with such a stubborn will against her hand that the flesh broke. Her blood had been on its feet when she let it go. (Only her fingers felt warm . . . a cold-blooded thing, drawing warmth from her, warming itself. The snake's head lay warm now as a lizard's head in the sand; the eyes deepened into her face, shown with big made-for-the-dark eyes with pupils that narrowed and widened. Stark into the wide pupils of her own. An extended green finger, that she easily could have killed.

The heavy center-dash of the eyes narrowed and the tongue lolled back into a throat where the blood flowed and gradually cooled to beat again, went through the relaxing body; and Helen watched. She watched sleeping, and waking in sleep to watch, as the snake-lizard she had not killed, again beautiful, lay its full shape near to her. And the sound its blood made pouring along the shiny muscles went from sleep to sleep, transposed itself.) Any god is a cold thing, she thought. As a life is cold until it touches another.

She didn't know how the snake held her; she had seen carvings and artifacts in the archaeological field, and in the museums–of strange lyrical structure, some hard in exact line, a human brain. Serpent, coiled as the brain. One felt a pressure from his own skull inside the bones pushing out, to look at it; but a lightness also, as though the mind were something else entirely, other than what a man had thought it was–; a separation, nearer the stone. (And she believed none of it.)

Connection, unexpected realization of awareness or perception. What men had thought before, and interpretations that had been made of another world that was not so different from ours–days lost from an old calendar count, with less discrepancy than we made with our structural year. Each a part of the same whole, and we were the exaggerate. Never being able to stop or hold anything, draw minute figures on rock or with our instruments that told our unrest.

And we were all together in this. That had nothing to do with age; the world itself was old! The thought went through her into the body and the long quiet legs, until her breath was heavy as the snake's breath. She felt surrounded and enclosed by the substance that had thrown the cold vertebrate object into the air; and she got up and stood at the window, pulled the violent shutters to the sides; bars beyond the glass covered the opening,– against theft, against any outside living matter or objectionable weight coming in; a darkening, before good light.

Over the park, clear through the breaking center where less tree growth was, she saw that a balloon had gone up. The balloon's base a circle, flat ring lower than though attached to and holding the puffed globe–set with tapers. A satellite of stars. About this lower carriage, bursting flames of small lit candles, strung together with wire and thin as those in the Cathedral. Resin sticks lighted, heating and lifting with vapor, sticks of gum-pine covered with what the old ones called *copal*, an incense, pushing the belly of soft cloth dripped in rubber, against heat into the atmosphere. Slowly it went out of reach of the trees–. In a wind draw floated higher, toward the jungle marsh in the direction of the sea. Then the draft changed and blew it back, over the town again; helium buoyed up from earth, that at last held even with the stars toward the ridge mountains.

Higher than the mountains. The pale lights faded into a pink glow, as though only one flare was left. The brief fires blended to one. Slightly duller, an earthly-colored place that did not seem to move making its own dim exit so far out from the open patios and streets that one would not have known it was there. Completely lost in the heavens. (Where a little snake lay, watching over the blown circle, its body curled about the swirling blown-full top, moved and swayed against the diminishing earth.) Or did it? The sending-up of the round-world seemed already to be forgotten. Not to be seen from among the brilliant unearthly stars. But when she looked toward the bed, the snake was gone. Did every night the people send the balloon up? She didn't know, but she didn't think so; and what were their reasons for the balloon–, could any tell her, or was that too, lost? It was not the end or the beginning of the fair: Thirty holy days for saints and angels.

For already others would be creeping in, Indians wearing their blankets from the crisp night, sparse on out of the way roads walking through brush woods, an emergence of waiting–. To spring another night in great whirls of exaggerate flight, be filled with sweet alcohol intoxicants and their native *cervezas*; with some resonance, a unit to dazzle the earth and the atmosphere. But Helen stayed sleeping. At 5:30 p.m. the train would stop on its way to Tapachula, she had nothing to pack. And where she went from there–didn't matter.

Having made return, in that contact of breath interchanged with what was to her the strange and distant legend of 'god'. The god Paul hunted for in the city of U, a city whose buildings had been laid together with stone–

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on a mountain, in the U-curve of a river his father had told him about. (If she could find him now, she could show him the way there.)

II: Saints of Heat

On the old drive to Comayagua, near a place beside the road where people came to wash, Paul stopped to fill his camp water can. The water poured gushing across the arroyo through a stone open-top duct, brought by a channel flowing down from distant in the mountains. He could trace the course, trace it and lose it, and as he held the can opening under the spray he thought how he had first stopped here with Helen. A fort cathedral up there—.

It looked like a blown cinder, made to live in the still unchanging heat.

Across the hot drain valley, the dome appeared mosque-like, opaque. Peaks beyond—grown about with hills, slopes to the holy crypts covered deep in lime and orange trees. Groves that sprang up under the pointed bell tower. Its great bell loft and steeple seemed to tilt the air, stuck-up straight, beat-out existing in motions of the earth.

Walking back up the bank a short distance, they had crossed a narrow bridge, not wide enough for vehicles. Flower clusters heavy as grapes hung over from a tree that grew out of the gulch, shaded the bridge. He remembered leaning, snatching at the branches to pull off some of the blooms; Helen had swung them around and thrown them away further up the hill, into the water passage. ("So they won't die," she said. As though they weren't already dead.) And it seemed almost good to him, the world was to be wallowed in and used. Way off, the stone road moved in levels.

And though the road was bare, it filled with children running. (As it had been that other day. Was it early in March? they had come down out of the cold. A long dry stretch, he thought of it then; his feet scorched under him, through the soles of his sandals; and he could feel the blistering earth, dust spreading up as he walked. He didn't have the divorce then, and he hadn't left her. He couldn't. But his mouth was dry thinking about it.) Helen's life was like a snake's and it stayed all coiled about him.

Over the rock road, passage for little carts and burros, a flock of boys had raced, spread-legged, lifting the loose dirt. Their feet puffed up the thick melted volcano-ash, that lay in thrown heaps under the terraced orchard, fruit trees dipping and reappearing always beyond the stretch of parallel walls that wound in fierce turns up the mountain. Branches of the trees, made into crosses and tied with faded dead flowers, wilted—lined the walls, lifted up their little prayer shapes to the Cathedral cross. Out from the lumpy fruit shade that made spotted shadows on the dry earth. The trunks of the trees shone brown and rough as legs of children running.

That was how he had seen it with Helen—. Living with her eyes and the earth unexpected. (They stopped in the flat stretch where hills spread to peak of the bell tower, watched a wandering drove of geese, the drake in lead, so male! directing the dumpy sure geese in rows of webbed feet and padded white bodies lashing the loose ground up over their crane necks and soft feathers. They turned following through arch gates to the churchyard, marched in file among the wooden cross markers.

A garden of graves, grassless heaps that filled the air and piled white sediment under the giant mimosa, flowering tree whose bare branches lifted without shade—sweating down its moist clusters that fell on the graves. The white geese scratched into the hot silt where hogs and fat pigs lay sleeping in the wallowed holes, their peaceful snouts blowing out nitrogen. Indolent, the pigs sprawled in the deeper dampness of earth, their bodies caked with bone debris and ashes of the dead.)

From the height, bramble and heat limbs tangled in the stiff air. A merge-dirt color, ungiving as the hides that wallowed and slept;—live tombs, they wallowed out the crosses, big sows that rose from their pits. Then the bell rang. Tolling out over the hills, a creature that lifted its cries against the summits.

Helen said the bell tower was a cage, and the bell inside a caught bird with wings. "The Quetzal?" he asked. (The old tarnished bell, against the lighter stone—nearer a buzzard, he thought. A broad-wing buzzard that hid squat in the tower. Until its wings spread and the body soared, settled and lifted from points in the unshadowed hills; the people marched back sedate as long rows of black geese with wide earth-eyes and grinning teeth—wings folded in black cloth about the hovered bodies. And the faces looked out broad, mellow as ripe fruit, under the draped heads; the bodies drooped, wings weighted with heat, and bent their beaks forward from the wooden benches, looked up from their black feathers into the altar.) Moving into her mind—.

Helen had a crazy bird in her head. She believed in the bird, and it gave her no peace. Because the whole world, or what she could see of it, was life to Helen: What she learned, what she could imagine, and what she could feel.

"Mangoes of light!" she said, looking up at the louver. Narrow opening that let the straight-sun in, brilliant as marigolds she had grown in their yard once or the yellow *mango* fruit, a fire against the darkness. "Imagine, some old priest making that." Because from the hole direct across with the light, spread a kind of benediction. A stream one could see as physical light, focused on the opposite wall, so heavy it seemed to hit the wall;—and there, on the flat stones just where the rays were, painted in exaggerate greens, reds and orange-yellows—with colored stones and glass, a priest stood. Holding in his stretched-out hands the warm juice of sacrament.

"It looks like blood—," and Paul remembered, "they used to cut hearts out." (He looked at the blackish thing, undercoated and air-struck. Held in a vial, a without-oxygen blood that poured ruptured over the bare rows of seats; the light and the mural was all one clearly saw in the room.) But Helen's mind left him, and the body could not hold off; he had made the climb again up the sprawling difficult road, hard with rock scales, and he was tired. He felt his own tiredness—. From a slow realization that whatever he did the earth remained empty; it held no charm for him.

"The sun is a white woods-bird," she would say, "whose feathers drip light; they slump in the white dust—." To him,

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leaning against the worn back-rest of a bench, the louver rays did seem luminous. Heavy wings that pierced him. (His head was so turned that without noticing, he looked straight into the plaque for as long as he could not sleep. He felt he was not looking at the man, but the man was looking at him. A force of itself shivered off. Broke against the colors and splintered from the stark background of wall, as when glass breaks. With what the crashed substance had picked up, of the picture itself, and of this long search for quiet and for peace that he felt in all people now. Life in the unrelegated mixtures and paint that was so near in texture to plants and material they came from—fell, the sense of a sacrificial god before him. God—or the sun, from which a tortuous reality came, or whatever it was that could make a man throw himself off. The act of inflicting pain. He was completely alone.) Yet he was also aware of the sudden quick heart the man held to him, a benevolence —the people he felt in presence of, the rope; the cut vine and tree. The shattered sky—; smoke that rose up into the sky. And the priest . . .

the dream

Sin settles close as the sun in bracelet of heat, a bracelet that binds and sinking stirs down into the plastic-base blood; the priest sits at the Sanctuary door and folds under his heavy mourning cloak about him from dust. Wicks of oil and burning incense drowse their brilliant flickers before the gilt-clay altar. (The oil smokes into the sky, passes a cloud, dark and fuming from black braziers against the colorless landscape. Makes a hollow path above the children running.)

The sun's weight folds tinselled from above – closing over and discoloring the hill, purple and copra. Into the broad mimosa heads, the harsh little blooms, and into the strung branches. (An absence of light and reflection of light, the double-wings of birds that mating fly, curving together without touch. The undulate bodies move together held fast as giant-moth wings.)

And the dark crowd-faces lift from crouched shapes, their eyes—sharp pits, seeds of *hokote* the plum they eat, as the cloud drifts into them. People from rock-dirt trails and grass-hovel houses, their hearts used to shadow, beat with a retention that drains from the point of distorted light into one dark—bleak beyond the monastery. They cannot move furtively into the Sacrament, they make their faces brittle; his flesh hidden, the priest holds up the cross.

High the repentant shape stands above the black wither; in the folded robe, a damp sweat cools under his arm pits, his arm raised into the silver-lake sky bearing up the Cross.

The people live under it; they go out into the shadow, wind together sticks with vine for their dried-up replicas, weave the broken tied-sticks about the hill base, their arms touching, winding in a circle as they move themselves up slowly below the great dome.

((the sky is a heart as lovers sing in infancy of heart. lovers who come in innocence and give their bodies, hidden open-hands in wonder; under the big tree that stands singly at head of the spring. they do not hear as the ignorant hears within the cloud a voice that mocks:

i am destroying you

i am eating away your wondrous unconscious heart

you will no longer sit with me and talk—you hurry in pretense that you will please me))

Their feet move padded soft as woods' animals. A wave of hot feet spread under the hanging green limbs, the wind-blown-airless orchard, their skins stretched tight with heat. From beneath the tree and the priest's cross the people cry their eagle faces, a caracol of faces, their voices tense bat wings, folding about the lovers. They will cut down all limbs from the tree and make it stark. The flowered crosses writhe low from the hill base, a bracelet of crosses held to their chests, the wild-bush heart. A skirt of moving snakes that devour in shadow as they hack out a living cross. (The earth is a mound of hunger.) They have caught the man under the tree and taken him—the girl, also; she is a girl easy to be taken. The men know her as one who answers want.

And the man cries out against this union that it should be so permanent:

((if i should die, it is not she i would die with; i would die with the young girl who lives where the furtherest tone of the bell sounds. it is she who has bound me; she has torn my flesh with her hips' wings.

and if to bear love there must be made a cross . . . it is i who will cut into the tree. i will whittle the crosses for what is called love and also sin, chip them down raw and white without repentance, for guilt that is pleasure. the pleasure of your hot god in my blood))

"Let it be three," the maniacs cry. "Even the Christ died with two other crosses. It is always Three." Flickering over the point of sin, the priest's cross high in repletion, its loathed pity catches the freaked faces within their sacrilege. Men are already climbing with their sharp knives, cutting the green limbs bare. Higher, the priest holds his derivative cross. It encloses the earth beyond the withered orchard, and the people are dancing—they dance among the dead fruit trees; their hips touch brief wings run through, links that fold and close about the dart bodies, held to one another,—a unity, rising and transparent.

((if i could hear what the women are saying: let the women come with brown red lips

a kiss will not blemish the replica cross. poverty ornaments as blessing

abstinence

can you tell me you do not believe a man exists in god))

But the people have sent to the wild plum river for vines; they hang the vines stringing them down from the high mimosa, a motlied tangle, and tie the disgorged ends, laurel over the fast heart of the man. They bind the breasts of the two loved girls.

Stretched close into their blue lofty coral, hands pull through the shadow and make the strong lengths taut; and the three are lifted into the air. The ropes open the limbs of their bodies and dangle them live baubles hung high over earth among the splatter of blue purple blossoms, darker lumps more blue;—a cluster of beating hearts. The people gather about as their hands clutch big over their own chests, crying their flesh against the hanging children, whose feet limp down, gum into the air and give way to die. (The

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crowd waits before them for the cloud that will melt with death, setting free the fire pans to flame in the sun; and they wait for the first ripe blood that ruptures relaxed out of the sinning mouths.)

The priest, crying under the tree, deep-covered in flesh, beats his tears against the thick bark, the bursting brown trunk.

((god, god, how can a man awake the dead? the blood drips down from their mouths. how can a man pray to such a big god who can reach through the cloud to scorch him until his body is like an ant's body. we need the cloud—pray for the cloud to protect us from this heat. that burns the earth and is god, that burns our souls and is god . . . curse to this blister god who is our heat))

The sky flows over with black wings. A wind sweeps dust over the crouch faces and into the air again the black under-dark wings appear; the sky bogs down in mud. In a great heap of splashed-up dust, their hearts beaten into by the rain, the wet people scatter like drenched ants; they hover like droop-winged birds. (They are leaves wet, dashed into the ground, the color of the ground—. Washed down into the caking mud, their eyes watch damp out of their wet mud houses. The pigs beat their bodies up from the graves; the white geese splatter into the road, throwing up the damp silt onto their cranes and fine feathers, through the settling puddles.)

The priest, rising, washed in the lace of rain, where there is no longer cloud and the mashed-down hanging blossoms do not drip slowly as blood, their wet petals sticking into the air, as he tears from the limbs, jerks at the stark heave tree, pulling to draw the long hemp-vines out over the branches. He will cord together the hanged vines, skin back the clinging bark and plait the gum-live centers into rope, a new tug rope for the hill-church bell.

And he hurries to the tower, long-waited, where his black iron bell pulls a-gong, its drenched shake claps tolling, flapping in feathery drip-squawls out through the wet bramble-soaked hills for the season of rain . . .

Paul got up from the bench. It was darker and the sun no longer shone on the mural. (Though he couldn't get away from it. The affect of the wall mosaic had been close to him as sound of the first bells before evening mass. And it was like his life had been—his life with Helen.) A man was standing just beyond the portal arch. The hogs had gone from the grave mounds, the geese weren't there anymore. And then he remembered,—that was another time, another year.

The air felt good, cool and good. He saw that the sky was banking, with what seemed to be a wind.

"Señor, if you come out now," the man said, "you will get wet." His thumb and forefinger of the left hand closed to a tiny slit to show how soon it would be. *Poco tiempo*—a little time. Always the first, she is a real one, *verdad?* It is worth waiting for," and he grinned.

"I thought it had already come," Paul felt back for the dream. He didn't know what he should explain. "I was looking at your mural."

"That I know. It is a miraculous mural." (Paul kept thinking he had seen the man in his dream.) "You are here before?" the man asked. "Not many people come to our Holy Place. But you have come now . . . two times."

"That is true. *Es verdad.*"

"The first, three years—maybe, a woman is with you. We remember because she liked the flowers. You bought many of the amarillos from us." (Yes, they had gone back, their arms loaded in marigolds. This man perhaps, had made a yellow crucifix for her.) "You are happy that day. We remember also because this year you return to us, you are not happy. You stay a long time with the Cristo—," as though it were a question.

"That does not look like the Christ in there—," Paul said.

"*El mismo.* It is the same," his big face laughed. "You look a long time into the Heavens, Señor. So long we think that you are dead," and the face became serious. "Felipo comes for me,—he wants to call the Padre. But then Felipo works for the Padre, it is his job that he should ring the bell. '*Un Muerto*!' he said. I say,—'Make a mark on him', on you, Señor. 'And see if he lives'. With his knife. On your hand it is a little place," suddenly receding to make it all a joke. "But the blood is quick. You live, Señor." He clapped his hands together, with a loud laugh to be bringing the rain; and the storm was on them.

"We remember also because the woman comes again, and she is alone."

Was it a long time—when did she come? But the man could tell him nothing. "I do not think so, Señor. But it was long enough." A month?—

"It is the time when many flowers are growing. But that is much of the time," and he moved further under the doorway. (Paul knew places further south where first rains dumped harder; he had been in them. Here, it came like rain blown before rain. The people ran into open places to look at it, and he hurried through the courtyard.)

"*Como Dios quiere,*" the man had said. "As god wills it" covered many things. (And he thought of the dream again, from the still-time, days of the stills as people called them, and from the caught light upon the mural. Paul couldn't throw his mind from it, what he had felt in that place. It was raining for sure now. He couldn't keep his face clear of the water, and his feet slipped fast on the rocks, as behind him he heard the big bell, the bell that hung above the little ones, the little time bells and prayer bells. This was the great event bell.) The bell followed him and kept tolling, and he tried to run, making his way over the mud and stones to the sound of it.

The bell echoes made him think of Helen, and he didn't want to think of that now. He wanted to get to the station wagon, roll the windows down, think where she was. She too, would be wandering somewhere. He had to find her and tell her, and unlocking the door quickly he jumped in, splattered his clothes against the wheel and car seat. The closed air beat against him—, and he rolled the windows back down. Then he sat there, looking out at the storm. The rain fell so thick he couldn't see the road, but he didn't know where he wanted to go, anyway. He wasn't thinking of the road. (He had to find Helen. He had to tell her that the world was made for beauty—.) It was made for beauty particular, and their beauty lay together. □

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SUSAN ZWINGER

TWO POEMS

TO DROWN HERE

To B. B.

I

You invite me to small towns
where you say "we'll drink at Mol's,"
buy bellies of stout dark beer.
You'll pay. Yet you remain
alone as stone amidst so many
rubbled nights.

You are intricate as veins,
hold sea, submerge again, again.
Intimate with all and none.
Hold breath again, again.
You cannot believe
you can't hold me down
for half your plunge. Our tongue
is circumcised,
held off
from ugly fact, you imply
I am not capable of your depth.
I just choose not to go.

II

Implosion under honest facts
bars honesty from parts in rites,
of small town life we live. We
stubborn, rocklike, grey, devise
our way of staying still:
fetus frozen at each stage
floating in formaldehyde
or beer, incubator sea, each jarred
off, lonely to the touch.

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You are drawn to bars where men
that look like used up cars
or land that's been worn out
buy with beer the rite
of bars, clearcut regulated pasttimes,
beer-veined subjugation
of the kind
the church knows by use of pain
of all the men resisting change.

III

(Horror of the Vacuum)

What happens in between
those notes in run and counterrun
in Bach. Between friends'
chatter. Between women as ideals.
Between bars. Between thoughts.
Between bed and meals.

Speak to it then, deal
in its terms, with chance
of no return, turn to depths
and dive. Look up and light
fades. In the end
a final churn
of colored breath: aurora borealis,
then stern and total
black. Too mindful
of your own:
lungs are self multiplied
too swift by self, cancerous to remain
down this long; weird lumps fingers
must learn to speak in tongues
your eyes never even knew.
Eyes sink back, sponge out.

Skin and hair evolve
white. You are private,
plunged as deep as any,
but have not the art. One plunge
too many, you are wiped out
catatonic white.

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SUSAN ZWINGER

TO THE MAD GARDENER OF SOLON

Roar One

It is easier to plant dreams
when they are vegetables,
and easier to handle women
when they all smell like old fish.
I am earth and water
and fire and soul. You stick
your image into me, and I take it.
I mimic it and squeeze it into shape.
Then I am the garden you plant in.

I am omnipresent. I devour all.
I devour your seed. I understand you.
I say "plant", "invest", "conquer",
and lay myself back in a ditch.
Earth taste sweetens your mouth
but you dream of shoveling
yourself under.

Roar Two

Here I come smelling of old wife.
You run scattering your garden tools.
You run until you come to the bar of your dreams
where a mother serves beer, and a grandmother
says "yes, have another".

You call women soft: they give everything they got.
But she is with me, and she gives destruction.

I must be ten feet tall
with thorns. You tear me down limb by limb. I persist.

We come to know each other so well, only
to give tools for the fight.

Spray me down, hoe me down.
Let the systemic poison you buy
for yourself, or the herbicide
you buy to chop me down, cling
like a Medea's cape to your vegetables.
In order to rid yourself of me,
you yourself must become poisonous.

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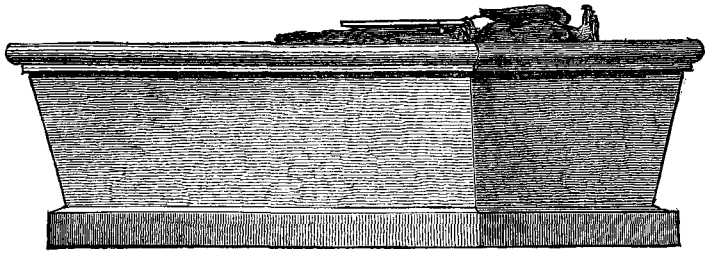
ROSELLEN BROWN teaches in a small Vermont town. A book of her poems, Some Deaths in the Delta, *was a National Council of the Arts selection in 1970.*

A STORY BY ROSELLEN BROWN



THE BIRD IS CLOSING ITS OTHER EYE

Riding to the funeral parlor together, those of us,
a family-full. I almost knew their faces. Quiet, waiting—
the car thick, muffled in silence, blank echo of snow
just stopped falling.

She was going with us, we would wait for her to
finish her dying when we got there. Uncruel, we would wait.

They met her when we walked through the open door and took her quietly into a room as though she were the mother of herself, who needed comforting. We in the lobby and then in one of the chapels, an aimless animal milling, rehearsing before her death what most call the funeral, early, waiting the viewing of the body the night before. They, helping her across the last single minutes of her death expertly and discreetly, not impatient with full certainty, we pacing the room.

A man finally walked the carpet to whisper it was time to move into the graveyard. The back door. A screen-slam. There was no surprise, no ambush. Who had brought her here.

The graveyard was the lovely, shadowy Dutch burying ground I walked through once, large square whose stones humbly bore names of the city's streets. Old unhumble bone home, this garden of robbed landowners sleeping now in pizza-frozen custard land. Now the roar of wellfed drivers, their animals. My deepest mourning that she would be buried here in a wind of candy wrappers.

She lay on top of the coffin, tilted, on a mound of gray carved flowers. Stone shadows of medieval queens lay so, statues of their lapdogs cowering lost at their feet. But she on her side, curled almost, comfortable, a hand under her cheek. The sight of the arms, familiar, still

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vibrating warm in blue blouse-sleeves with rolled cuffs—
a cry in my throat. *No, I have lived with my arms all this life! I have spent the whole of my sight looking down at them, their shape, the way the little hairs lie.*

And it was real, I was here, my arms bent as if sleeping and hardening to sandstone. Someone, weeping suddenly, a widow-sound, that lunging to throw herself in the gaping gravehole, and I blinked my heavy eyes open to see who had ever loved me so. Cool air hurt my face, so recently fevered, touched fingers heavy in the holes—are there embalmer's holes, where the blood's sucked out?—and I knew there was only a cold space for a nose.

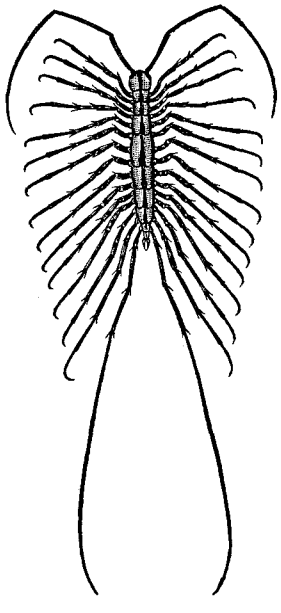
Then that voice crying out, rising up, running forward. Rough fearful arms around me, raising me from my hard bank of flowers. My lids blinking against the cold. My pained face forward to see. "You're alive!" Shaking me. "Alive, look! Don't be afraid. Mother!" Sitting up slowly there, all ruined holes, seeing the streaky red then green of the street-light at the corner, waking among the stones my bare arms poked pale out of the rolled sleeves, the wind, finger by finger, was playing my face like a wooden flute.

* * * *

Threshhold rites. So that every coming and going may be a celebration I will learn never to leave earthweight behind.

You may not enter this house
with a stone in your pocket
dead in your arms, dried leaves, fruits, flowers
with a book whose spine is broken
with any face raised or chiselled so small a palm could smother it
paperweights bearing the world in water
leather seared or branded with a human name
or framed, the image of any leaping runner

But bring and be welcome
any thing too hot to touch
green still breathing, multiplying air
white water trapped steam
fish whose eyes wink back blue light
the highest branches light-eaters
moulted feathers slipped scales
pipes with bowls ample as kettles
balloon-skin



Honor the hosts of the house, not aged but ageing, fearing contagion from the broken luck of wish-bone, rabbit's foot,

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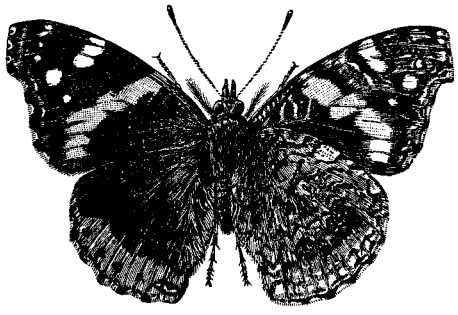
clover, all torn untimely and for little reason. Carry
weight out of it.

Bring music and up
flow
that
all things

* * * *

Someone is chasing a child with a butterfly net. The rim of the net is falling, the shadow coming down cool, but the child turns without warning and flies out from under it. Rising against the depthless blue, I remember clapping my hands and they rang blue and purple, shimmering like moiré, like cymbals.

* * *



"'*. . . it seems that people are only touched by death. Maybe people will be touched enough (by ours) to do something constructive and peaceful with their lives. So they will try to find that ecstasy is just being alive.*'

"Craig Badiali, 17, and Joan Fox, 17, in a note to be opened after their deaths. They were found dead in the Badiali car on a secluded lane in Blackwood, N.J. The death has been ruled a suicide." (October 15, 1969 / Vietnam Moratorium Day)

* * * *

No, your friends cannot contain you. Their intentions are so good, you are embarrassed for them, touched. They hold in their hands your corners, your manifest edges, the loose eye-lashes of your depth, a circle cut out of your belly like an old Bavarian peasant-clock. One holds three fingers between his, and tight, as though that were all of you and worth keeping. The three small square-nailed fingers of your left hand. This solid bread of your mind and body you break with guests across the strewn table. Words are crumbs. What your friends know may be a metaphor naming something you resemble.

* * * *

Everything is an after-image. My eyes live their own life. How they connect, lap over, make the edges of all hard things blur and soften, circle biting square, yellow digesting orange. I think of all the people I have felt farthest from: who have kept their vision too firm, their boundaries accurate as formal hedge-rows. And have had contempt for me. There is a nimbus around the moon, around a streetlight, on a dim night. Fur, gentle, warm, emblem of generosity at best, confusion at worst. Never of meanness. But as the eye is formed, such are its powers: I see my eye through my own eye. Why should I disapprove?

* * * *

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10. A poem when she says it, her baby-voice scudding off the end of the scale, sinking, groping for the right order. The alphabet a paradise yet to be lost, a feast of surprises, dips and heights and hollows that take the voice

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on an adventure. It is new and entirely hers: that others
own it would outrage her (if she believed it).

What are you hearing
brutally quiet
prickly pine and peaseblossom
ears ears
and ears?

All the same to you
what you will hear/ won't
what drifts down
fast a loose trickle
or on the wall
uncatchable spots of sun-dance

A difference you can
almost touch
slowly inches up
beyond your fingers

Here are words

Here is milk sleep
the smell of snow coming in the window

* * * *

toast *stapler*
xylophone *dust*
patchouli *raisins*
heights *indignity*
green *shifting*
spelling *pea-soup*

I play the game endlessly, no game
at all, any two words (things)
placed side by side: Is there a
magnetic field in the space between?
Tension? Or is it in my mind, string, glue, gum, the reaching
and pulling, bending matter from its natural directions,
match-making every thing tangible, a few abstractions on the
side, grave witnesses. Often enough they sit well together.
They find hidden things in common. Why not? (Not for my sake.)
"So that is poetry, really loving the name of anything and
that is not prose." (who but G. Stein)

* * * *

Sparks in wheat

*

[ ]
[ ]
Think
[ ]
[ ]
[ ]
[ ]
happy

*

plums

*

When my songs first became
when the sky was made
when the earth was made
the breath of the dancers
against me was made
only of down:
when they heard about my life
where they got their life
when they heard about me:
it stands.

(Apache)

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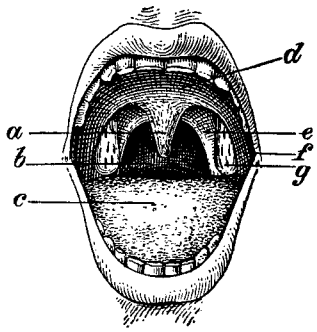
In copulating
One discovers
That

*



Those, too, are poems. The spaces are time's teethmarks in the flesh of Archilochos (c. 700 B.C. / Archilochos himself, poet and missionary, was killed by a man named Crow, "either in battle or a fair fight (for which) Apollo in grief and anger excommunicated Crow from all the temples.") A handful of small stones not yet melted to sand. They stand, life-markers, throwing obstinate shadows on the empty space, advancing, of the paper margins.

* * * *

Five and a quarter feet of the sky is mine; and any syllable I can pronounce.

* * * *

The day is delivered—I have learned that there is a language which represents night this way: by a tree on which a bird that has already closed one eye is beginning to close the other. . . .

* * * *

Unless the morning stuffs my mouth with sun.
Otherwise that morning taste
is silence, sour
under the tongue.

* * * *

Every morning I forget how it is.
I watch the smoke mount
In great strides above the city.
I belong to no one.

Then I remember my shoes,
How I have to put them on,
How bending down to tie them up
I will look into the earth.

The poem is Charles Simic('s). I don't know him, I saw him once in a room acrid with the smell of many copyrighted poets. Is the poem still his (see copyright) or is it mine now that it has jiggled one of my pulses? What damages will he sue me for, if I give it to my own tongue now and say, "Here. Yours."

* * * *

My ears are open as a bird's throat, hungry. What the day drops in—inch-worm, blind-worm, stunted snake, walking-flying fish, four bugs caught by the wings—depends on the state of the pauper's market. The Exchange

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is a great many words mimeographed and staple-bound.
Often they are pointed the other way and have sharp
edges and the inclinations of bondsmen. Those days one
goes very hungry, when the blue chips soar.

* * * *

When you fail to/ cannot/ do not/ write for a long enough
time, all the entrances to your body close. You are a
virgin, stiff with a fear of others and yourself. Your
ears, your eyes, are sealed and gargoyles sit speechless
at their sides, barking at speech. Even your navel, almost
a tunnel, is blind stunned closed. Something stands
against it inside, keeping the light out—like a piece
of heavy furniture blocking a door against burglars, rapists.

* * * *

His hair grew after his death? His nails?
What about words then, sentences, paragraphs?

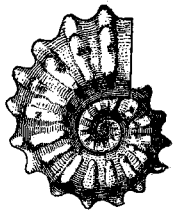
*

He was only beginning the peroration at the cemetery gates.
Finally no one could interrupt: his wife's corduroy mouth
gaped showing nothing but tears; his friends were thinking
on themselves, dourly; perhaps his children could hear his
voice raised against the heavy bolted wood, but they didn't
respond if they did, just walked forward slowly, hands behind
their backs, half-orphans busy feeling how it felt, contemplating
stones. So he raged around the close room of his memory,
rapping his knuckles against the walls, setting a few bits
of disheveled furniture straight. He was winding down, the
chance to say it all, to get his own back, was nearly frayed
out to thin air. But before his jaw sank closed on its soft-
rubber hinge, he discovered something he wished he had known
before—it made him want to lift his chest out of the satin
and shout—that speaking didn't need listening. Was it
bitter to think that? They were only related by coincidence,
by expectation. Habit. The words were good, like a taste
in his mouth that had given up food weeks ago. Plump and
sweet, full of his own blood. They broke like berries pouring
out of a basket, echoed through the bony rafters of his own
skull and were heard.

* * * *

The salmon says, I will swim
as far as the river runs.
I will leave my scales on the nets
to be their fish, but I–
I shall not be killed. I shall go by.

(Yurok)



Who is too wise for that dream
of water flashing on fins?
I leave my words on the wind's nets
to be their poems–to say
I know I shall be caught. But not today.

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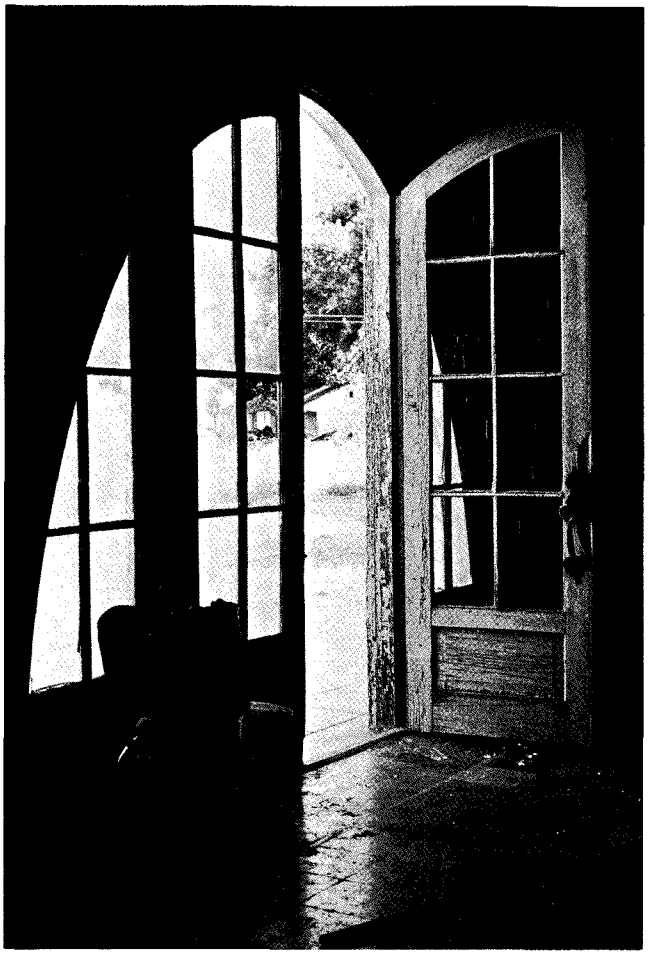

AT SEBASTIAN'S HOUSE

A STORY BY YVONNE POSTELLE

Three old couples sit around the table at Sebastian's house drinking sweetened coffee and eating roquettes and montecaus. California's winter sun is harsh against their wrinkled faces. *Sitting among them awaiting my husband's return* from the golf course, I hope my presence partially fulfills his filial obligation. I lift my hand to shade my eyes and nibble on an anise flavored cookie while their voices crunch and jab and explode in the air around me.

Around the room, half a dozen clocks measure out the afternoon: two on the buffet, a narrow six-footer in the corner—its chains and weights glint in the sun—one on a worn-out phonograph beside a glistening white satin bride doll left by some granddaughter, two on the wall.

Sebastian has had them all apart, has oiled their innards and wound up their springs. He keeps them synchronized so that they ring out the hours and half hours in unison. In the kitchen are more clocks. And still more in his work shack at the back of the narrow lot.

In my house there is only one clock and it is in the bedroom. When Sebastian and Conce come to me for Sunday dinner or for Thanksgiving, I watch them wander through my clockless rooms, their eyes searching restlessly. In the years I've been married into this family Sebastian has given me half a dozen clocks. I store them in the garage, the linen closet.

I sit among the clocks and old people and listen. Two rooms away my children kneel, or sit, or lie on Grandma's faded rose-beige carpet, their faces turned toward the broad screen of the television. Already they go to school and share their days with friends and foes who are nothing to me but syllables heard in passing, soon forgotten. I am free to sit among my husband's people and sip my adequate wine.

Sebastian's friend, Manuel, is talking. As usual the talk is of money—always money or Spain, money or childhood. A man of medium height, he looks tall in this room of Spaniards. A wisp of hair is brushed across his smooth brown scalp. Coarse brown hair grows around his ears and runs around the back of his head. His skin creases in

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YVONNE POSTELLE lives and works in San Jose, California. She has "a son and a daughter and a cat with no name," as well as a novel nearing completion.

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wrinkles at the forehead and along the cheeks, but the color and texture is firm and healthy. His brown mustache was clipped perhaps a week ago. As he talks he gestures with his three-fingered hand. The little finger has been gone a long time; the place where it grew has shrunk and sucked itself in against the third finger so that no bony protruberance shows, no scar. His hand looks like a cartoon hand.

At the head of the table, Sebastian, leaning on short arms, has pulled his newly bought too-large trousers above his waist with elastic suspenders to prevent their chafing against the still tender incision where doctors went into him to clear away a blockage in his intestine. His eyebrows are gray under a fire-scarred forehead. His nose thrusts like pitted granite out of an invalid's face. Lifting his head sharply he says to Manuel,

"I don't buy nothing on credit. I pay cash. Always cash except for the houses."

Conce, cermoniously erect beside him, fingers laced together in front of her, sits as a child might sit to recite a catechism. She speaks.

"In Estepona when I was a girl my grandmother had a big house on the square. A whole block wide. The front door opened on one street, the back door on another. Right across the street is the grocer's. He has a bamboo pole holding up the awning. When you buy on credit he cuts notches on a bamboo pole. That was his bookkeeping. But you had to *know* him, not like here where anybody buy on credit."

"That's what I'm saying," Manuel insists. "There no one gives you a helping hand. When I first come to San Francisco I had a pretty good job. I'm working at the box factory, and I've five or six men under me. This old Spaniard, knowing I'm from Spain, he come to me for help.

"Only he start telling me a long story, you know the way they do? And I have to keep reminding him to keep to the point. Only he can't keep to the point. Finally I say, 'What you want?' and he say there's a piece of property he want to buy up by Fairfield and he need $150. So I write him a check, and jeez, he's surprised. He say, 'What? No collateral or a note or something?' and I say, 'I know you'll pay,' and he did.

"Only in Spain it's not like that. When you're broke there, you're through. I've been broke two or three times here before I start my trucking business. But I make out all right. In America you have a chance."

Manuel's wife, a pretty woman in a blue and white silk dress nods in agreement. Her husband raises his deformed hand to point toward the head of the table.

"That's why I tell you, Sebastian, stay here. Here is your home, your children, grandchildren. You're not going to like it there."

"There I'll be a big shot. I build me a house. My children . . . they come see me."

Manuel shrugs.

"Well, maybe they all rich, your children, but I don't think so."

Sebastian frowns accusingly at us. His metal and plastic framed glasses glint in the four o'clock sun like the brass chain on the clock.

"Does anyone ask why I go to Spain?"

"Why do you go, Pop?" I say quickly.

He doesn't look toward me but goes on gesturing with his fire-withered arm.

"To see something a little different. Around here everywhere I go everything's the same.

"And maybe I go for kokua. You know what kokua mean, that Japanese word we learn in Hawaii. Here I got no kokua. My sons don't give me no kokua."

Beside me Conce has lifted her coffee mug, but she puts it down again and turns her face toward her husband.

"Why you need kokua? Why you need help? You got your home, your property, your pension. Your sons got families to look after. You think Spain, it's going to be a paradise. It's just like here."

Sensing the group solidarity, Sebastian looks at his thick fingernails and shifts in his chair. He is willing to let the talk of Spain go for now, but Jésus, a white haired man with long yellow teeth (they are, I decided long ago, his own, for no dentist could devise such a parody) wants to set the record straight about Spain.

He's nearly rich, but it's no secret that his wife, fat and smiling beside him, holds the purse strings. In over forty years he has never gone against her wishes because, he told me once with a reverent face, she has the business head in the family. His white hair lies thin on his pink scalp. His eyebrows, gray and bristly, look as though they've been trimmed with one whack of a garden shears.

"At least in Spain the youths don't wear dirty jeans and long hair the way they do here. And when you say good morning to them they don't turn around and say 'old stupid' the way the American youths done to me."

He jabs water-inflated fingers against the palm of his left hand and nods his head for emphasis.

"There the parents discipline them. And everyone when they come out in the morning, they have a white shirt on and it's ironed, and they wear a tie when they come out in the morning. They know how to show respect."

From the living room my children's voices rise above the television dialogue. The click click of channels being changed, then my daughter's high whined threat, "I'm gonna tell Mama," and I wait for her to come righteously demanding that I correct her injustices.

And she comes, her face thrust forward, frowning without a wrinkle. I swivel my knees to the left, reaching out open hands to lift her onto my lap. She shakes her head and pulls back. Letting my hands fall, I lean toward her and ask in a whisper what is the matter.

"Danny won't let me watch Shirley Temple. He turned on a war."

"Tell him to turn the war off."

She runs down the hall, her voice hard and triumphant.

"Mama says turn it back right this minute."

Manuel's wife smiles at me as if we share a secret.

"How old is she?" she asks, and I tell her five and a half.

"She was born the day Sebastian got burned," Conce interjects. "It looked like it would be a life for a life."

As usual I look quickly at Sebastian when someone says this, but his face bears no resentment, and he tells us again,

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"In the hospital I used to dream about her. They kept me doped up for the pain. I was out of my head, you know? And I would see there up on the wall . . ." He holds his hand up and measures with finger and thumb. "A little spider. Only with human hair and face. They must have told me she was born with lots of hair. I could see her face, and I knew who it was, but way up in the corner by the ceiling." He chuckles and shakes his head. "A little spider," and he measures it again.

I wait for the click of channels changing. Instead I hear the scuffle of rubber and cloth against the carpet then Lisa's voice empty of its triumph, "Mama said," and Danny's taunting laughter and once again the shuffling of feet against the carpet and the volume blares out down the hall. The old people jerk their faces toward the open doorway.

I hurry toward the loud confusion of artillery.

On the white screen, flat gray figures drag themselves through darker gray trenches. In front of the screen a three dimensional struggle: Danny leaning forward, sneakered feet wide apart for balance, his cupped hand guarding the channel selector. Lisa pushing and pulling at him, her teeth bared between tight lips in the same grimace as the soldier in the mud on the screen behind her.

Danny is stronger. She cannot move his hands. She presses her fingernails into his bare wrist, but only this morning I myself trimmed those nails and they are ineffective as weapons of war.

Reaching around them, I turn the volume control and the sounds of battle cease. "Turn loose," I tell Danny and lift Lisa's hands away from him. She kicks out at him then, and he swings his hip into her. "Cut it out," I say and lift Lisa away. "Turn loose of the controls or turn Shirley Temple on as I told you."

"Would you like some candy?" their grandmother asks. She stands in the doorway behind us. They turn and race ahead of her down the hall toward the kitchen. It's too near dinner for sweets, but I say nothing. I search among the channels until I find Shirley Temple, then go back to sit with the old people leaving my children to the comforts of a sweetened tongue.

As I sit down at the table, Sebastian is smiling for the first time today.

"Ouihee, my father beat me," he exults. "I remember in Hawaii he took the buckle of his belt to me. It was Sunday. The young people go for an outing. We have a sled, you know, on runners with a horse pulling.

"Alfonso, he from Spain, too, he has a new hat. A straw hat with a cloth band around it. Maybe it cost thirty-five cents. When I jump on the sled—the sled's moving, see?—my hand go like this and hit the hat, and the hat fell off. I tell him, 'Go get your hat,' and he say to me, 'I don't get it. You get it. You knocked it off.'

"Well, I don't go and he don't go and someone come along and take the hat, see? So. When we get back they tell my father. He beat me with the buckle end of his belt."

Manuel cuts in indignantly,

"My father don't beat us with no buckle. My father never beat us. Once a year maybe he spank us with a rope folded in half on our backside. But no buckle of a belt. A folded rope don't leave no marks or nothing, but it hurt like hell and we don't forget it. My mother now, she give us more spankings than him.

"Once she beat me about the head with a shoe. It was Hawaii. I go to school on the plantation, and there's a Portuguese boy—his name was Manuel, too. He get me in trouble with the teacher, and she hit me across the hand with the pointer stick. Hurt for a week.

"When I go back to my seat, I say to this other Manuel—only we have to have an interpreter cause he don't speak Spanish and I don't speak Portuguese—'Wait till I get you outside after school!'

"He tell the teacher, and she hit me again. As I go back to my seat I say to him again, 'You wait.'

"My mother make my pants without no pockets in front. She think if you have pockets you put your hands in them and tear the pants or something. So my trousers just plain jeans with no pockets.

"We don't have no pencil sharpeners then like today where you stick the pencil in and turn the handle. We have to sharpen pencils with a pocket knife. I always borrow one from Japanese boy. When he don't loan it to me no more, I beg my mother for one and she give me a dime or fifteen cents, and I buy one from the Japanese.

"I don't have no pocket so I carry it in my fist like this. After school I wait for Manuel where he takes a short cut through the sugar cane. He see me and he come after me with a piece of sugar cane. I raise my fist like this and bring it down on his head, and Oh my God, the blood flow down all over his forehead. He cry, and his brother come and take him home.

"I go home and pretty soon here come his mother. Mad, you know. She talk to my mother something terrible. I'm in the kitchen scared like hell. Then my mother she take off her shoe and beat me over the head. Ooheaoui.

"Then this other Manuel's mother go to town and tell the sheriff. Two, three days later the sheriff come to school and talk to the teacher, and she point to me and say, 'That him.' So the sheriff he say to me, 'You come with me.'

"I think, what the hell, he can't do nothing to me. No one is dead. So I tell the interpreter to tell him what for? What have I done? He say, 'In this country we use our fists. No knives. That very bad.'

"I say, 'What harm done? I don't mean to hit him with the knife. I forget I'm holding it. If I mean to hit him I open the blade and then he have no face left. I slice it right down. Then he really bleed. You don't believe me, look at Manuel's head.'

"So the sheriff he go over and look at Manuel, and it's almost healed already and he just say, 'Whew, you bring me all the way out here for this? Next time you bring me out here make it for something important.'"

Manuel leans back in his chair chuckling, and I smile into his eyes seeing how proud he is.

When I was a child and sick in a lumpy bed shared with my sister, my father came from work, and, sitting beside me on the edge of the bed, fed me toast softened in warm milk, fed me the slices his calloused fingers separated from a clustered orange. It wasn't often, the milk toast and

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orange slices. Why do I remember that now and not the belts and peachtree switches, the sudden rages?

My son comes to lean against the back of my chair. His grandfather offers him a cookie and, although he still smells of chocolate, he goes and takes it. Standing in front of the tall brown clock in the corner, he chews while watching the square face with no cover, its hands moving imperceptibly through the air we breathe.

Reaching up he can touch the brass six sunk into the wood of the clock's face, but he cannot touch the hands. His fists close on the brass weights at the end of the chains, and I say sharply, "Danny," but Sebastian, up from his chair, rushes to the corner, his voice harsh,

"Leave it alone. Don't touch the clocks."

Danny backs away around the table's corner staring into the wide anger of his grandfather. I turn my lap toward him, and he sits upon it. His feet touch the floor. He leans his head back against my shoulder, and I wrap my arms around his middle, whispering, "Grandpa's afraid you'll accidentally break it."

They are all watching me. Do they think I'm too easy on the children, that I spoil them? I want to break the silence.

"How old were you when you came to Hawaii?" I ask.

"Maybe eight, maybe nine," Manuel says.

"How old were you, Pop?"

"When I come to Hawaii—eleven or ten. When I come to San Francisco maybe eighteen."

"So all these years—over fifty—you never went back to Spain?"

"I go. I go when summer comes. Maybe I don't come back, who knows?"

Conce jerks her shoulders under her shapeless black and white jersey dress.

"Why you want to leave your home, your family?"

Manuel shakes his head back and forth.

"You go to Spain to live and it's not like a vacation. *Vacatione es bonito.* Every day is celebration. But everyday living not like that. You say kokua. Your sons don't give you no kokua. What the hell? They got families to take care of. Look what you got here. Why you need help?"

Sebastian opens his mouth, but Manuel goes on.

"You don't get no kokua in Spain. If they think you don't have money, they say, 'Why he come here to live off us?' If they think you got money, they jealous. What you do if you get sick, again, huh?"

"I don't say I move there forever," Sebastian protests. "Maybe I stay two years. If you get Medicare there I don't know. I have to check. But you think doctors there don't know better than some doctors here? If all my family give me two hundred dollar, maybe I go to Spain."

I think I know why he can't spend his own money. I think I know why he wants his children, with less than he, to give him money. I can't bear to look at him, so I stroke my son's hair. But Conce either doesn't see or has no pity. She sweeps a strong veined hand across the tablecloth as though searching for cookie crumbs, pulls her upper lip away from her dentures in a grimace.

"I don't give you no money to go. And I don't go to Spain to live. Why I want to go? All my family's here. Maybe I give you money to come back, I don't know, but not to go."

Reaching inside the tops of his trousers, Sebastian scratches the healing stitches with flat knuckles. The surface of his eyes glaze over, and I see him withdraw his thoughts from us.

Three weeks ago, lying in a high hospital bed, he told me the older he gets the more vividly he remembers Spain, the more he remembers his youth. Now he withdraws from this time-measured room to a hot dusty road connecting his father's farm to the house in the village where they ate and slept and went to mass. His father walks beside him, for it is noon and they're going home to dinner. His father is singing, but the boy thinks of the wine dipped bread his mother sometimes gives him before dinner.

(Does anyone in this room but me know what he's thinking?)

He looks around at us with the look of a man alone. He looks at Jésus with only one son and at Manuel with only one son and his eyes narrow behind the bifocals.

"One father is enough for a hundred sons, but one son is not enough for one father."

Jésus does not look at him. He does not look at anyone. I think they've been through this before. Manuel speaks slowly without anger. Starting his family at fifty has kept him younger than the others. What if he does wear a tube in his side?

"Well, one son enough for me. I think if I ever need help, he help me. I'd spend my last penny to help him, like when he come home from Viet Nam to go to college if that's what he wants. I don't worry none. One son enough for me."

The old people don't look at one another. Especially they don't look at me sitting here with my half grown son clasped on my lap. The clock ticks steadily. The sun comes more weakly and falls almost kindly across the gnarled fingers that clasp the coffee mugs. They sit silent, but I hear their minds turning towards their savings accounts, their pensions, their medical insurance. Despite their talk, it is an awesome thing to think of being dependent upon one's own children.

At night when my children have awakened from bad dreams their arms have clung to me in the darkness, and I have rocked them gently, crooning wordless reassurance. Now I pull my son closer. He squirms away.

In a way I'm glad to be out of it. How could I rock them, their bodies heavy and soft with age, their skin dry and speckled with death? What could I croon to them for comfort?

I reach across Conce and touch Sebastian's hand. "Sure, Pop," I tell him, "I'll give you two hundred dollars," but he doesn't seem to hear. I feel no answering touch.

Conce's chair scrapes heavily against her waxed linoleum floor. "*Oye! Quiere cafe?*" At the sound of her voice the old people give a jerk and thrust the mugs toward her or cover them with cupped hands. While she brings the percolator the clocks begin to chime out the afternoon. Lifting their wrists, the old people catch a last flash of sun and gaze upon the gold-framed face of time. □

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SUSAN FROMBERG SCHAEFFER

THE WAIT

You have been waiting:
This is the sign.
You go to the closet,
The clothes hang there darkly
In a violet light.

Their heads are purple cabbages,
Nodding,
Their eyes are grubs,
There is no mouth.
The shoes

Point in to the dark side,
Their heels are spikes
They are driven
Into the damp flesh
Of the floor,

The floor is shiny, it pulses.
They are filled with something,
It is snail flesh.
Do they stir?
The door is beginning

To flap and slam,
A sail in a gale.
There is no wind,
There is no gale.
In its lathe ribs,

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The house sighs,
It means it,
The four white diaphragm walls!
This is the second sign.
Now you hear it, the ticking,

The bed is ticking,
Wound to the alarm,
The radio is ticking,
The carpet is ticking,
The carpet, thick snake,

Rises up,
Striking the walls.
Clock faces
Mass at the window you run to,
Big ones and little,

Cog wheel after cog wheel,
A swiss watch, jewel-moved.
In the closet,
The dresses are black pendulums,

Swinging,

They reach the wall.
Black tongues,
They sound now, black brass.
This is the end, then.
The room

Swings through blue space now,
Square hammer,
Headed for the bell of the sun.
The gold tones die.
Try

Scream now,
Cactus tongue,
Throat of charred grass.
Grass blades turn in your eye.
An ivy vine

With leaves of cement
Covers the green, seamless door.

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punkin

A Story by Alyce Ingram

It was the week before school opening and they'd just barely got settled in the new neighborhood when Mother said to Jennifer on Friday,

'We'll shop this aft...you could stand a new dress to start school. Daddy said then he'd meet us for dinner maybe.'

So the two of them showered and put on their slips and then Mother put a plastic cape around her shoulders and put on her makeup and combed out her hair and tried to make up her mind about what dress to wear.

Finally she took her new orange dress off the hanger and said,

'Daddy wants me to wear this one.'

And she put it on and tied an orange and white silk polka dot scarf around her neck and then she put on green patent leather sandals and told Jennifer to wear her yellow sun dress, the one with the big patch pockets.

Then the doorbell rang and the delivery man brought Mother's new black wig and Mother tried it on and she said,

'I think I'll wear it. Daddy likes me in it.'

Jennifer thought Daddy had probably never seen Mother's new wig since it had just been delivered and Daddy wasn't along when Mother picked it out but Mother often said people said things they hadn't said and Jennifer was used to it even though sometimes when this happened it made her tummy feel funny.

Mother hummed as she drew on her darker eyebrows to match the black wig.

Mother's hair was shiny and yellow most of the time but she changed the color every once in a while and she had three wigs counting the new one.

Once Jennifer heard her say to Daddy, 'Every woman should have at least five heads...a different color hair each day of the week and wigs for weekends.'

Now she said to Jennifer, combing her hair in quick jerks,

'...You've inherited mine. It's just blah. Maybe we should give you a perm tonight....'

When they were both ready Mother dabbed perfume back of her ears and she looked at what was left in the bottle and she said,

'Hardly any. We'll pick some up today.'

And she added it to her shopping list and took her green patent handbag and they got in the car and drove off.

Mother looked very beautiful in her new black wig but she didn't look at all like Mother.

She looked like a lady on a billboard.

And it was a beautiful day.

There was just enough breeze to riffle the scarf around Mother's neck.

Mother said, 'Scrumptious day.'

Then she slowed down at a crossing.

Now her eyes narrowed and her fingers gripped the steering wheel tightly and she said without taking her cigarette out of her mouth,

'And you're not to worry about starting a new school, Punkin. If you don't like it there and they treat you unfriendly Mother will come and get you and we'll try another one. Mother isn't about to let you attend a school you're not happy in. Not by a long shot.'

And Mother stepped on the gas and shot forward like a zooming red bird and Jennifer wished her mother hadn't mentioned school starting.

Every time she thought about having to start up in a different school, she got sick to her stomach.

If only Mother wouldn't keep talking about it, making it worse.

'What's the matter...you look green around the gills,' Mother said now as she stopped for a train crossing. 'If you're carsick take some gum from my purse.'

So Jennifer got some gum out of her mother's handbag and she chewed it and sure enough her stomach felt a little better but not much because Mother started up with a jerk and she drove very fast today and she took swipes in the road and she passed up several cars on the way and one of them tooted at her but Mother just laughed. She didn't slow down.

They drove by the Clover Shopping Center where they had shopped the week before and Mother said they'd go on a few miles further to the new Crossway Shopping Center that had just opened.

'...Daddy wants to try out the Crossway Grille for dinner,' she said.

What Daddy had actually said was,

'I hate eating in shopping centers. Why don't I come home and sack out and you pick up something Take-Out at Roman's like maybe barbecued ribs and we'll make it to a Drive-In.'

But Mother had answered,

'We need your moral support.'

When they got to the Crossway Center Mother parked the car in the Elephant Lane and she took her white patent tote bag from the back seat and they got out of the car and locked it and Mother said,

'Let's go the Lounge and freshen.'

So they took the escalator to second level where Mother told Jennifer to crawl under and let her in because she didn't have coins for the private stall and the public carried

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ALYCE INGRAM is a frequent contributor of fiction, and still lives in St. Paul.

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infectious diseases so Jennifer crawled under and did as she was told.

They both washed their hands afterwards and Mother wiped off her lipstick with tissue because she said it clashed and she put on a different shade that she said matched her dress better and she said, looking toward the coin box on the door they'd just come out of,

'We just do it this way when the place is empty and we're short of cash.'

Then Mother took off her scarf and said it was hot around her neck and she dropped it in her tote bag and they left the Ladies' Lounge and went across to the Jewelry Department where Mother tried on bracelets.

She also tried on a pair of orange dangling earrings but she didn't buy anything in Jewelry.

Then they went to the Girls' Wear and bought Jennifer a red skirt and a white blouse and Mother carried the box and Mother also looked through a tray of plastic and metal hair bows and barrettes and she tried a comb in Jennifer's hair but then took it out and put it back and she glanced at a container of rings and then they went to Hosiery where Mother bought a pair of panty hose for herself and she put them in her bag.

Next they shopped in Perfume and Toiletries and Mother tried perfume on her wrist and she sniffed several different kinds and even sprayed some on Jennifer but she told the salesgirl they were just looking and then she said to Jennifer,

'Let's cut across through stationery to the escalator. It's time to meet Daddy. He'll be starved and fit to be tied. They always are.'

In Stationery Mother looked at a tiny gold pen with a jewel clip but she didn't buy it and then she skimmed through a rack of paperbacks even though she never read because she told Daddy everything was s-e-x (she spelled it out) and then they started to leave the department and meet Daddy but a man stepped up from behind and invited them to accompany him to the offices up on Sixth.

They took the elevator.

Mother's face looked different now. Not like a glossy billboard. It was as though she had changed into a different pair of eyes.

When they stepped off the elevator the man showed them the way to the office and when they got there he shut the door behind them and two other men who were sitting there stood up and a woman with bangs and horn-rimmed glasses came out of another room carrying a pad and pencil and there were all kinds of little machines with tiny buttons that everyone seemed to be pushing at once and the next thing she knew Daddy was standing there beside them pulling at his tie and looking at Mother in a funny sort of way.

And then the man in the gray suit from downstairs who had brought them upstairs took Mother's tote bag and dumped it on the desk and out fell a bottle of perfume and a pair of orange dangling earrings like the ones Mother had looked at and a bangle bracelet and a paperback book and Mother's scarf.

Then the man asked permission to look into Jennifer's patch pocket and when he brought out the tiny gold fountain pen that Mother liked so much nobody acted as though they believed Jennifer when she said she didn't know how it got there.

Not the man.

Not Daddy.

And not even Mother who was sucking in her cheeks. And using one thumbnail to scrape nail polish off the other.

Nobody said anything.

Not the man.

Not Daddy.

Not the lady with bangs who just chewed her lips and looked away.

And especially not Mother who knew better than anybody.

And Jennifer would have cried out but everything inside her seemed to freeze up and she couldn't make a sound except a sort of *guck* like a chicken makes when it gets its head chopped off. □

STEVEN ORLEN

THE BEST HALVES OF OUR LIVES

The dark lake's emptiness
spreads to its receding shores.
I am glad to be alone
to evoke your images
around a table playing cards, old friends
with little to say. At our feet,
the dogs sleep fitfully. Our wives,
who keep us together and apart,
rise to remind us of our daily lives.

I stand by the water watching clouds,
patient for miracles. For whole days
I remember nothing at all.
Here at the edges, less matters.
I measure life by days away from friends,
imagining each in his storybook house
writing letters which ascend
in hexagons and circles
to settle miles away on my roof,

and the angel in the lake, imperfect friend,
finds me in this other place,
grim with maturity and distance,
watching a kingfisher and a swallow
dip in a last, evening flight
and meet their shadows rising in the water.

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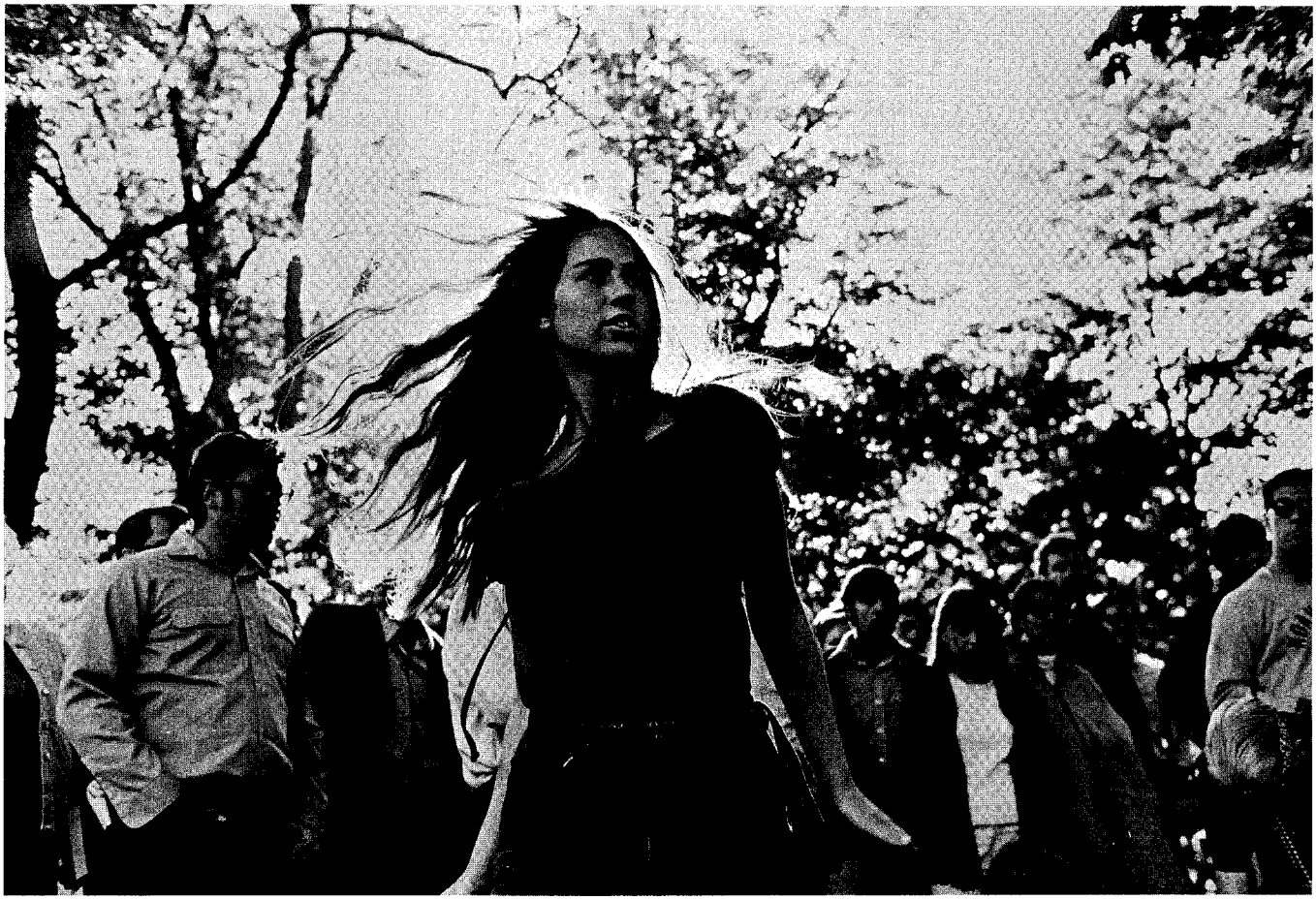

ARE YOU HAPPY?

A Story by Roger Dionne

One morning my tutorial student Inez Lumpkin took her tape recorder from the closet shelf and made sure the batteries were in good repair. She had passed many days without a project and was happy now that she had found one. The tape recorder was a $209 Wollensak, very light, but equipped with seven-inch spools. At one and seven-eighth inches per second, she could record a good long time without interruption.

Inez could certainly see it was raw, cold, and bleak out beyond her fluffy kitchen curtains. Nevertheless, she bundled herself against the cold, strapped her tape recorder over her shoulder, and drove to the university. She would stand at the corner between Humanities and Social Sciences.

Afterward Inez sent me the tape she made. Somehow she managed to smuggle it out of the hospital. I mixed myself a bourbon Old Fashioned and settled down in my study to listen.

* * * * * *

–My first subject. A short, round, gelatinous little man. Pin-striped suit, tiny pink cobwebs etched on his cheeks. Feet like trowels. Self-important. . . . Sir, are you happy?

–I beg your pardon?

–Is there plenty of sunshine coming your way?

–Excuse me. My class is waiting. I haven't time for politics.

–Politics! Just tell me if you are happy. Yes or no. No politics.

–Yes, well, if you don't mind, uh, excuse me.

–The duffer's gone–fondling the brim of his hat, nodding to the students he passes. By God, I have changed his day. . . . You there. Are you happy?

–No time for games, sweetheart.

–And you? Talk into the mike, please.

–Do I look happy?

–Looks are often decept . . . . They're dashing away too. Won't face the question, these people. Won't interrupt their visions. What if happiness is a political question. A subversive question. An open question. A silly game. Inhuman. Inconceivable. Are you happy?

–No. No, I'm not happy. No, I'm definitely not happy.

–That's better. A very definitive answer. A line drawn under the addition. I like that. It's reassuring. . . . You there. Are you happy?

–Not interested.

–Are you happy?

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–Negative.

–You over there. Yes, you. Come here. That's it, close to me. Just between you and me and this mike, darling, does Fate smile on you? Are you happy in this vale of tears?

–I'd be happy if I could stick my six inches up your gigi.

–The frightened boy is running off giggling. What wild wells of courage did he need to tap? . . . But here at last comes my first strike, I think. A big peach-faced boy, Shetland sweater. On the lacrosse team, no doubt. He looks exquisitely dumb and happy . . . . Excuse me. Are you happy?

–Are you serious?

–As serious as over-population, kid. Are you happy?

–What is it, some kind of gimmick?

–I'm simply counting people on this here Happy People Counter. The poor thing is starving. Please help me.

–It's got to be some kind of gimmick.

–It's a conspiracy, that's what. Goons are creeping behind the arras ready to pounce on you, pluck you up by your pretty scruff and demand: "Your happiness or your life!" Do you know where your happiness is tonight?

–What the hell you talking about? It's eight o'clock in the morning. Who's this for anyway? Who are you?

–I'm the big bad wolf. I huff and I puff . . . . He's jogging away. He misses the firm smooth shaft of a crosse in his hands. Yet he looked as though he might have a jingle of happiness cluttering the spaces of his brain. Of course, looks can be decept . . . Hey you. Are you happy?

–Go play with yourself.

–Young lady, happy lady, smiling lady. Are you happy? Please be happy.

–It's a bad show. You'll never find anybody.

–I'll give it a chance. With perseverance anything is possible. The world is large. It contains multitudes. Perhaps this isn't the right locale.

–If anybody tells you he's happy, he's lying. Or it's the aberration of a moment. He forgot to think.

–But look at that man walking toward us. Bright eyes, springy legs. Probably coming from a sweet lay, a guiltless sleep, and on his way to his project, his research, his squash match, the lecture he's sure will be brilliant. Or fairly sure.

–Try him, why don't you?

–Sir, are you happy? Are you marvelously, exquisitely happy?

–Happiness . . .

–Yes?

–Happiness is . . .

–Yes? –Yes?

–Happiness is deader than God.

–I've been watching you, young lady, and you'd better stop whatever it is you're up to. Don't bother these people. You're only causing trouble. You know the times we live in. You're liable to get hurt.

–Are you happy, my friend and protector?

–I have the power to arrest you, you know.

ROGER DIONNE does his writing in Waterbury, Connecticut.

–Oh God.

–Remember, I have my eyes on you. Don't try any monkey business. I'm wise to your kind.

–Are you happy in your wisdom, my champion?

–I got my eyes on you. And I'm not alone. Remember that.

–Isn't there anyone who will deal with the question? The question is happiness.

* * * * * *

It's high time I interrupt the tape and explain a few things. First, as I've already said, it was cold, raw, and bleak that morning. The fall had turned bitter early in October. But we had to stay about, working on our projects, and suffer the inclemency of the season. Fierce winds whipped around the university buildings. Naturally one was anxious to get inside.

Our university stands compactly on a stark northern hill. Around it the land stretches for miles, devoid of even a farmhouse or a barn, a pine grove or a pond, everything but the gray water tower on the next hill. *Greensward* the landscape could be called in summer, and it's pleasant enough. But in the fall, when our courses sputter anarchically far below those exquisite calibrations we fashioned during the summer, the north wind comes to blow the last feeble leaves from the few trees the landscapers allowed, and presses the university into a colorless limbo, helplessly awaiting the long white onslaught of winter.

Everything was done long ago to make our university a place for learning and reflection. Hence its location–thirty-five miles from the nearest town, a metropolis of 9,000 possibly happy souls, charging along about a year behind history. We have no place to dine, drink, laugh, languish, whisper words of love. They arranged everything so that we at the university could think, could learn and reflect. As a result, there are petty wars in every department–not ideological, mind you, but simply faction against faction, Dr. So-and-so's people against Dr. So-and-so's, thrilling for a fight, gasping for breath. The result of bare land and pure thought.

And then there was Inez. We must consider Inez. She is not a pretty girl. Her skin is sallow in all seasons. Her hair is a mess. Her browless black eyes bulge out at one, and her nose is unduly large. Her body at least is acceptable, but the clothes she wears do not exploit it. She does not consider clothes important. No, Inez's appearance, of itself, could not in the best of circumstances evoke happiness. And there was her attitude, the way she approached strangers. Her attitude, poor thing, was not altogether correct.

Finally, there is the world. All is not going well with the world. Even the 9,000 possibly happy souls thirty-five miles away must know that. One doesn't have to be up-to-date to know that.

Altogether Inez questioned 105 people, not a fair sampling in a community as large as ours after all, before the trouble started. Her perseverance naturally drew a crowd. The shouting and jeering of the crowd make it

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difficult to hear the dialogue on the tape. I have tried to sort it all out in this transcript; you have only to imagine crowd noises in the background throughout. The crowd was divided, fairly equally apparently, between those supporting Inez and those against her.

And so on to the denouement.

* * * * * *

– . . . Happy with that beautiful blond hair, those hefty breasts.

–No. Of course I'm not. No one is. What do you expect?

–One person. Saying, "I'm happy. Yes. Not sad, happy I am. I am hopping happy, heigh hippy hop happy, hooping happy, dilly dilly doo. See me dance my high happy dance. I am so happy. Sooooo happy, spreading my arms around the bright beachball sky. Happy. Happy is happy is happy is happy." . . . Oh, let me hold your hand. Let me touch you. It is so difficult to be straight, not to be ironic. When Susan Sontag came back from North Vietnam, she complained of the simple expository language of the people there. But then she recognized the symptoms of her aesthetic consciousness, reacting against the moral consciousness of the North Vietnamese, which sounded simplistic to her, which sounded stiff and old-fashioned. That's the problem. I mean, someone will listen to this tape some day. "Hooo hooo," they will say. "Bring on the jugglers, the contortionists, a little boffo."

–What are you doing down there, young lady?

–You're so obliging, sir. What I'm doing is plucking at your sleeve like a little girl in a naturalist Italian movie. Grainy black on white. Take out your billfold, kind sir, and give me a note of happiness. Could you do that, sir? No? Now shove me away as in a movie. It will bring down the house. Tearful women will stream from the crumbling theater and wallow through the stone streets of the city on a flood of happiness. Are you in that flood, sir? Dans le bain?

–Do you realize what you are doing?

–What am I doing, kind sir?

–You don't mean to tell me you don't know what you are doing coming out here with that mike. Look at yourself. You're not exactly Miss America, you know. Some girls will do anything . . .

–Shut your mouth, you.

–Leave her alone, you.

–Come now, boys. Why don't you move to the privacy of your bathrooms.

–Why don't you move along, mister. I'm not looking for trouble. I have as much right . . .

–Oh yes, but of course. At such times, one must dredge up the old myths. Fictions! Perversions! I'm surrounded with empty brains. Happiness. Rights. All kindergarten chatter, you idiots! I thought this was a university.

–You're making too much of this. I'm just . . .

–All is emptiness and murder. What's left is a Chopin Prelude, a rose, a beautiful face. Don't meddle with the fields of emptiness, the lines of murder on these faces.

Out of the background noise on the tape, a voice begins to shout *"Sieg heil! Sieg heil!"* The single voice grows into a raucous chorus: *"Sieg heil! Sieg heil! Sieg heil! Sieg heil!"* It's pretty silly. Inez and her interlocuter must shout to be heard.

–I'm not any of the people you think. I thought . . .

–Three thousand years of civilization has brought us here, to this corner on this empty hill. Nine hundred years ago we were building cathedrals, . . .

Apparently trying to drown out, to jam, the *"Sieg heils,"* another chorus of voices begins to sing. Pretty silly too. But this university, this land, this nation . . .

–My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty . . .

–You'd better come with me, honey. Things are turning ugly.

–I won't move. I shall be adamant. I shall go down with the ship. By the way, are you happy?

–Oh shut up, will you.

–LAND WHERE MY FATHERS DIED, –SIEG HEIL SIEG HEIL SIEG LAND OF THE PILGRIM'S PRIDE HEIL SIEG HEIL SIEG HEIL SIEG

–Will you people shut up! . . . I'm sorry. I didn't mean to raise my voice . . . . Are you happy, young man?

–LE - ET FREE - DOM RING.

–Oh God.

–Fascist pigs.

–Has the bird of happiness sung to you, young man?

–Beautiful, baby, beautiful.

–Didn't you understand me?

–Didn't you understand me, young lady? The fields of emptiness . . .

–Gimme that mike.

–Leave her alone, you damn fascists.

–Get her! –Take the mike! –Stop them! –Kick her goddam teeth in! –Where the hell does she get off? –Stop them! –Come on! –Pimply jerks! –They're asking for it . . . .

–NO! NO! NO! Happiness! I'm investigating . . . .

–GRAB IT! WATCH OUT –GET YOUR HANDS OUFF LEV ME UP THAT OOUUGH LOOKOUT CHRIST - OMUREDY WITOVERMATTER GUDIMLOOKWERETO- RESHUVELOOAGHHTHINKYOURATCANEEEEEYERS- HUVAWWWEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE- EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE . . .

–Police.

–Police!

–POLICE!

–Off the pigs! –Off the fascist pigs!

–Let's get out of here.

–No! Don't! Leave me alone. [Or "No, don't leave me alone."]

The wail of the police sirens lowers and halts. Screaming, shouting, scuffling, cracking of fists and nightsticks. More E's.

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–I'm on the ground. They didn't get the mike . . . . Something's wrong with my leg . . . . People are all around me, fighting . . . . My breast hurts. Feels like a corkscrew . . . . Oh, I can't move. I can't . . . When are the police going to get to me? . . . I see them! They're . . . they're beating everybody. People are running from the clubs. Somebody's tripped over me. His head's a mess. Clots of dirt and blood . . . . NO! OFFICER! I'M NOT DOING . . . Ugghhh.

–Come on, sweetheart . . . . Nice little ass you got there. Put a bag over your head . . . . How's that feel, sweetheart? Like to feel his big brother?

—

A car door slams, and there is only the sound of contented breathing.

* * * * * *

The account of the incident which appeared in our little metropolis newspaper thirty-five miles down the road ran as follows:

> *Seventeen persons were arrested yesterday when police were called onto the university campus to quell a disturbance involving several hundred students. After students ignored orders to disperse, the police moved in to prevent further injuries. Forty-six persons, including several police officers, received medical treatment at the university hospital for wounds resulting from rocks and bottles hurled by students. Fifteen were hospitalized.*
>
> *Among those hospitalized was Miss Inez Lumpkin, a graduate student in English and the alleged instigator of the disturbance. She is quoted as having shouted, "Off the fascist pigs," when the police arrived on the scene. According to witnesses, she had been previously quoting North Vietnamese propaganda.*
>
> *According to a university official, who has requested anonymity, Miss Lumpkin is a member of a hippie love-cult resembling the cult of Charles Manson, the California mass-murderer, who has been sentenced with three others to die in the gas chamber.*
>
> *"We have evidence that Miss Lumpkin was at the time of her arrest conspiring with a goon-squad of outsiders smuggled on the campus for that purpose to take over the Humanities and Social Science buildings and rename them Happiness U.," the official stated.*
>
> *Miss Lumpkin has been suspended from the university. She is charged with disturbing the peace, disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, inciting to riot, and conspiring to commit a felony. She is being treated at the university hospital for a leg fracture and head injuries received from a rock thrown by an unidentified student, according to police authorities. She will be transferred to the county jail to await trial upon her release from the hospital. Bond has been set at $75,000.*
>
> *When asked what her next move would be, Miss Lumpkin replied, "Any of several things. The possibilities are infinite."*

The possibilities are infinite, Inez. Once out of the dark woods of justice, you could join in a conspiracy to transform Humanities and Social Sciences into Happiness U. You could seek out the boy who would be happy to stick his six inches up your gigi. You could weave bright rugs with arabesque designs to hang over your kitchen windows. You could play hopscotch on the university walks. You could wend your way to North Vietnam and volunteer to be Hanoi Hannah. Or you could finish your doctoral dissertation on the poetry of Emily Dickinson.

Take your pick. □

PETER WILD

THE BUFFALO

I have opened my eyes a thousand times
to the sound of falling snow, like a puppy born
to light, and seen the buffalo falling,
a rainbow in cascade over the cartilaginous brow
of a cloud moving across the land

and my ears opened, new wax
to the pleasant music of their
floating down, stiff-legged
howling, their lips gold
and then up again through the earth
and charging through a mountain

when you go to the spot and press
the ground, dampness and grass,
there is nothing there except
what you can imagine before
your receding toes. your breath makes no sound.

and a party comes dancing with
its lamps and furniture, under tables,
out, speaking in a language
that you understand before you know. the girls'
white flesh soft as codfish
as they take your arm becomes your own.

still after they have gone, constantly
changing clothes, you see them on the horizon
and they have grown to millions singing
in their new robes. still you are in your shoes
and under your tongue something melting like a coin.

you go back to find the wet seam
of the wound. your heart grows big
as your feet go cold. and stooped there,
pierced with arrows, they swirl back
moving their lips in and out, wearing horns,
reaching for the sunset that snakes and twists
in your bowels.

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TAKING NOTES ON THE BLACK

1.

Dead is difficult to write.
So we confuse

a sad location - - -like his Dodge
went over because of ice.
I'd rather say

he's dead. But where
do we moan? Fugue

can you sleep
with your music? Darkness

begins with the dark. Where
the road is under poor construction,
there are two torches

side by side; mouths in
a good position.

TWO POEMS BY MICHAEL BURKARD

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2.

What dance? As you ducked
the branch and mentioned
steppe, I saw
no arc

of arm, no
star falling.
It so happens

God is thriving in the bush,
eating berries. Or
as your story buried

him, he's the bulb of war that won't
go out. So what ——you

are as you are. You
hear you are, naming an old lost

piece of horn. And
dancer.

and dancer.
always this:
maybe we are nothing.

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NOTHING HAPPENED

A Story by Katherine Harding

The wind had died early in the morning. Now white, hazy clouds hung ponderously over the Connecticut shore, filtering the sunlight into a steady, sultry glare. The air was so still that the branches of trees reaching past lawns out over the sand seemed painted onto a backdrop.

After a tasteless breakfast, they read their respective books, sitting silently side by side on chaises. They did not speak to one another for over an hour, listless and reluctantly involved in the fiction in their hands. When Stanley did say something, she wouldn't hear his words, but rather the noise of his voice; and she would inwardly squirm, as though he had trespassed on inner, private territory—or worse, that he wished to take it away from her. Yet, she remained uninterested in what she read.

Stanley stood up and stretched. "—Tide's in. I'm going for a swim. —You coming?"

"—If it were sunnier..."

"After my swim we'll go to the Co-op. The book I ordered should be in." Slowly he let himself down the stone steps. The sand hissed as he moved away down the beach. Mattie put down her book and gazed at the swollen, gray water of Long Island Sound. She lit a cigarette and moved to the stone steps and watched him walking along the water's edge. She wondered why he hadn't gone into the water directly in front of their house.

As he reached the end of the beach, a woman emerged from the house directly behind him. Stanley did not see her and stood, ankle deep in the water, hands on hips, his stomach protruding. From her place on the sea wall, Mattie could see his stomach jerk a little and his mouth pucker responsively: the sound of his burp carried across the still, morning air. Mattie wondered if he'd gone down there just for that.

But the woman behind Stanley did not seem to notice and slowly came down her steps to the beach, her arms raised to put her blond hair in place. The woman wore a green bikini on which were patterned large gold disks. Her skin was tanned dark brown.

Stanley said something over his shoulder to the woman. Mattie thought it strange that he'd spoken first, but perhaps the woman had said something Mattie had not perceived from her position on the sea wall. The woman moved around Stanley. Now her hands were on her hips and she was looking down at her own foot idly moving in the sand. Stanley, meanwhile, had picked up a handful of flat stones and was throwing them with a great thrust and sweep of his arm into the face of the sea. They skipped four and five times.

Mattie heard a phone ringing. She ran halfway up their lawn, then realized it was a phone in one of the other houses along the beach. When she came back to the sea wall, they were sitting down cross-legged, their heads bent toward the sand. The easy curves of their backs, their hidden faces, the strange silence of the water, and at the same time, the absence of the sound of their voices implied an intimacy, a harmony between them. She thought if a friend were to come along the beach now, he would assume the woman was Mattie.

There it was. The woman had Mattie's build and only slightly blonder hair. The relationship of the two figures on the beach was one which Mattie had always felt she had with her husband. She always thought they might look that way to other people.

When she heard the phone ring, she sat for a minute not wanting to be tricked again, not wanting to leave her place

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KATHERINE HARDING lives with husband and children in a suburb of Boston. This is her first published story—not counting prize-winning fiction she wrote when she was a student at Sarah Lawrence.

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on the wall. But she recognized the ring, and ran quickly over the lawn to the porch. She was suddenly very irritated: "Yes?...Oh, yes, all right....See you then. Goodbye." She started back to the beach, but changed her mind, went to their bedroom and put on her bathing suit.

As she passed the chaise on which they'd been sitting earlier, she picked up her novel and started down the stone steps. She felt more comfortable, somehow, approaching them this way with something in her hand. Her calf muscles were stiff and tired as she worked her way over the loose sand. They did not notice her coming immediately, but when they did look up, their faces were fresh and anxious. The woman got up and walked slowly into the water. She adjusted her bathing suit strap and dived; a neat, perfect dive which barely left a mark in the sea.

"Hi. Where's she going?" Mattie asked. She sat in the same fashion as the woman, trying to effect the same curve in her back.

"To Barrel Rock. I don't think she'll make it." He smiled at her.

"We used to swim out there every morning."

"We're out of shape."

"Maybe we should try it...." Mattie watched the woman's crawl; each arm in turn rising slowly, effortlessly out of the water, coming gently back into it again; an even rhythm counterpointed by a controlled kick. "What's her name?"

"Martha something. —Hey, you both have the same name. I never think of you as Martha..."

They fell silent. Oppressed by the heat, Mattie turned on her stomach and opened her book. Stanley moved up the sand to the neighbor's stone steps, sat down and watched the woman swimming.

In a little while Mattie heard the woman sputtering, breathing heavily. She moved clumsily over the sand and sat down beside Mattie.

"This is your wife?" she asked. Mattie turned and smiled at her.

"You share the same name," Stanley said.

"Oh, yes? I never liked it." The woman's face was small, brown and freckled. The water had smeared her mascara slightly. She seemed to know this and wiped her forefinger under her eyes. She sat Indian style and slumped, so that the top of her bikini loosened and entirely exposed her small, brown breasts. Mattie wondered where she was able to sunbathe nude. "My mother named me," the woman explained, "—would you believe it?—after her mother, Martha Washington Coburn, a commando of the D.A.R. Mother hated her guts, so she hated my guts, naturally. But that's not your mother, is it?"

Mattie laughed and avoided the woman's peering face by watching her own hand stroking the sand flat and smooth. "No."

"Mattie's mother—"

"Stanley." Mattie said.

"I've always had my doubts about Mattie's mother," Stanley said lamely. "She was so quiet and all."

There was a pause; the woman continued loudly: "She was quite something, Granma Martha. I liked her really, I guess because my mother didn't; I liked her in spite of, or even because she was very nearly crazy. 'Nervous,' 'worried,' everyone politely put it; but she drove her husband, a creator of 'Birdseye' and just fired from the vice-presidency of General Foods, to leave her table (a dinner party for twenty) and to draw a bath; whereupon he cocked his .38 and fired a single shot into his head."

"Jesus! What style, what a scene!" Stanley grinned with admiration at the woman.

Mattie was embarrassed. She did not know how to react to personal revelations. So, she merely turned on her side and propped her head on her bent arm.

The woman stretched out her own oiled legs and smiled at Stanley. "Where you from?" she asked. Her gaze rotated slowly to Mattie.

"Me? Originally?" Mattie sputtered. "Or where we—" She saw Stanley's eyes stop on her face. "Boston," she finished thickly.

"No kidding? Granma Martha still lives on Commonwealth Avenue by the park there. I'll never forget when my mother dumped me at her apartment for a week. I was eleven. Fat, self-conscious, about to get my first period. I came with a suitcase packed to the brim with Kotex. Anyway, Granma took it on herself to buy me school clothes. We went to Joseph Shehadi's, an expensive shop filled with organdy, satin and Mary Jane's for eight-year-olds; everything I loathed. I wonder, is it still there?"

"What?" Mattie asked. She had been daydreaming about something forgotten the moment she tried to remember....

"Shehadi's?"

"I don't think so."

"Well, anyway I fought Granma over Shehadi's. It must have shaken her for we left abruptly. We were walking along Arlington Street there, you know, and suddenly she gripped my elbow. 'We must walk faster, I must find the powder room!' 'Can't you wait?' I scolded, thinking for the moment she was my little sister, Lily. I was amazed at myself. 'Nooo," she wailed in this voice;—it sounded like Lily, in fact, or a four year old Granma Martha; and at the same time I heard this splattering and looked down. There on Arlington Street sidewalk was Granma Martha's wee-wee. 'Aren't you ashamed!' I hissed. At this point I didn't know who she was, I was, or what. 'What are you going to do now, Granma? Just what?' 'The Ritz.' Granma blurted. And there ahead of us loomed The Ritz. 'Nevermind, Dear,' Granma said, recovering completely. 'We'll stop in at The Ritz and get you cleaned up. Don't worry about your little accident.' 'My accident?' 'I won't tell your mother, Dear.' Can you beat that! She pinned the whole thing on me!"

Stanley was laughing hard. "She must have been quite a character."

"She's still there, on Commonwealth Avenue," the woman said wonderingly. "And you're from Boston.... Vacationing on the Connecticut shore when you can have the Cape? You're crazy!"

"It's quieter here," Mattie explained.

"You're quiet," the woman said directly to Mattie.

"Yes." Mattie smiled hard, as if that might put an end to further questioning.

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"Here I am blabbing. What about yourselves?"

"Oh, I don't know," Mattie said, and stood up and walked into the water which was brackish and turbid.

"She's involved with manufacturing polyethylene insulating materials outside of Boston, and I'm with Bache & Co.—a broker."

"Oh?" the woman murmured.

Mattie worked her way over the pebbles and slime until the water reached her waist; and then she slid in. Heading for Barrel Rock, she tried out her old AAU version of the Australian crawl, rolled over into a backstroke, then back again into a butterfly. She became very tired and turned back to the beach.

Stanley still sat on the steps while the woman stood with her back to Mattie. The woman took her time saying goodbye: hand on hip, she looped her thumb under the elastic of her bikini, opening and closing it carelessly, revealing the curve of her buttock.

When the woman left, they hurried up the sand to their own house. "What did you think of her?" Mattie asked.

"I don't know. Kind of nice. A story teller, but lonely, really."

"Did you see what was happening?"

"What do you mean? Nothing happened."

"Among the three of us?" They climbed to their own lawn. "Remember? You went off down the beach to swim, and it wasn't till you left that I paid any attention to you."

"You were reading—"

"Yes, but when you left I watched you. Then she came down, and you started throwing stones in the water, so casually, like a 16-year-old boy showing off for a new girlfriend."

Stanley laughed. "I always skip stones in the water."

"You do? —Then she walked around you in a sexy way; then sensuously poked her foot in the sand. She was always arranging her hair. From a distance it was a real seduction scene."

"Ah, Mattie—"

"Then the phone rang. It was Mr. Ehrlich calling about tuning the piano. When I was talking to him, I thought, I've got to go back to the beach. Just the same I put my bathing suit on—I had time for that! Don't you think that's interesting?"

"Not really."

"Do you remember her bathing suit?"

"Not really. I mean it was green, I think."

"It was a bikini, and what did I put on?"

"Your bikini. You hate your bikini."

"I had to put it on. Then, when I sat down she got up and went into the water. It was sort of an acknowledgement on her part. Then she and I showing off..."

"Showing what off?"

"Yes: she swam out to Barrel Rock, so I had to swim out; of course, I couldn't do it."

"I see—"

"And then, when we were talking—"

"That's what I noticed— As usual, you didn't say a damn thing."

"I know. I was so embarrassed, because she was after you and I didn't know what to do about it."

"She wasn't!"

"All that verbal undressing, telling so much about herself— What a come-on! And you loved it!"

"No I didn't. She wasn't saying so very much; it was just conversation. But what I was hoping you could see—"

"—I didn't see enough?"

"—the similarities between you two."

"We may look alike, but God help me if I *am* like her! I couldn't stand her...that running off at the mouth....I was ashamed *for* her. What business is it of ours—"

"What did she say that was so awful?"

"How her mother hated her, and the Grandmother; how her grandmother peed on Arlington Street; how her grandfather committed suicide; how she was a fat adolescent—"

"Like you were."

"Many adolescent girls are."

"So what's the harm? Those stories were rather funny, anyway. And there were many parallels between the two of you. Your mother, for instance."

"Please, let's stay off my mother."

"All right, but you know what I mean."

"I really disliked her intensely."

"Your mother?"

"No, the woman! I couldn't understand how she could do it, disrobe like that; it made me furious. For some reason."

"You were so quiet then. Listen to you now."

"It's different."

"I often get the feeling you're dying to run off at the mouth like that, but you don't dare. Who cares? Why not."

Mattie turned away from him. "You know as you said that, I thought of a Steinberg cartoon. Is it a Steinberg cartoon? Where someone speaks words and after a little space they become arrows and some of them turn back on the speaker. Isn't that foolish and psychological and boring? But the woman...." Mattie said vaguely. "I kept wondering if she noticed. That is, three things occurred to me: she was consciously seducing you; she was unconsciously seducing you and unaware of what her behavior meant; or that it was all, all in my mind."

"It's all in your mind," Stanley said wearily.

Mattie sat down heavily on the edge of one chaise and after a while Stanley sat on the other. She felt bored and uneasy. The wind had broken through the clouds and now the peaks of little waves punctuated the surface of the sea. The sun came out, but still Mattie's skin grew cold in the wind and she went in the house to put on her shirt and slacks. When she came out Stanley was reading his book again.

"Aren't we going to the Co-op?" she asked. "I thought you'd finished the book."

"No." He put it down and looked out at the water. "The wind's picked up. Maybe we should find a boat to sail...."

"That's an idea." Mattie leafed through the pages of the novel she had been reading, but she could not find her place. □

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Joseph W. Meeker

HAMLET AND THE ANIMALS

A perennial problem for admirers of *Hamlet* is the prince's apparent inability to act when action seems clearly to be called for. After meeting with the ghost of his murdered father early in the play, Hamlet knows what must be done and he has sworn bloody revenge. Impediments appear or are manufactured by Hamlet, however, so that by the time we reach the middle of the play naive readers must doubt if he is ever going to get on with the business. When everyone's patience is thin, Hamlet revives our expectations and his own flagging resolve with his mousetrap: the play within the play designed to illustrate the manner of his father's murder, to gain a telltale response from Claudius, and simultaneously to validate the ghost's story. It works too well, leaving Hamlet with no further excuse for delay and every reason in the world to take his revenge. "Now I could drink hot blood," he proclaims; given the circumstances, it is easy to believe that he means it.

We have two more acts to wait, however, with only a minor murder (Polonius) to satisfy partially the bloodthirst that has accumulated in Hamlet and his audience. Complications appear abundantly to stall the inevitable violent revenge as the action is diverted to focus upon the queen, Polonius, a voyage to England, the death of Ophelia, squabbles with Laertes, and many lesser distractions of the brain.

The first small distraction is one of Hamlet's most inventive and properly admired manipulations. Immediately following the players' scene, when Hamlet is brimming with murderous intent, his school friends Rosencranz and Guildenstern arrive to ask him to talk to his upset mother. Moments later Polonius enters with the same request. The three message bearers are all allied with the king and so represent the enemy, but all are personally harmless to Hamlet. There is no direct threat in their manner or intentions regarding him. One might expect Hamlet to brush all three aside or ignore them at such a moment—or, alternatively, perhaps to murder them on the spot if he is as worked up as he says he is. Instead, Hamlet attacks them with the weapons he controls best: metaphor, wit, and imagination.

When Guildenstern asks Hamlet to explain his strange behavior of late, Hamlet in turn asks Guildenstern to play a tune on one of the recorders left behind by the actors. Guildenstern confesses that he lacks musical skill, and Hamlet then drives home his point:

> Ham.: Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass—and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ—yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.
>
> (*Ham.*, III, ii, 347-355)

Guildenstern is effectively silenced by Hamlet's scorn, and says no more.

Polonius then enters with similar meddling in mind, but he is disarmed when Hamlet plays upon him like a pipe:

> Ham.: Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?
> Pol.: By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.
> Ham.: Methinks it is like a weasel.
> Pol.: It is backed like a weasel.
> Ham.: Or like a whale?
> Pol.: Very like a whale.
>
> (*Ham.*, III, ii, 370-381)

Hamlet manipulates those who would manipulate him, expending his anger through verbal mockery rather than direct aggression. When he is at last alone, he weighs the hatred that is now confirmed within him and decides how to discharge it:

> Ham.: 'Tis now the very witching time of night,
> When churchyards yawn and Hell itself breathes out
> Contagion to this world. Now I could drink hot blood,
> And do such bitter business as the day
> Would quake to look on. Soft! Now to my mother.
> O heart, lose not thy nature, let not ever
> The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.
> Let me be cruel, not unnatural.
> I will speak daggers to her, but use none.
> My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites,
> How in my words soever she be shent,
> To give them seals never, my soul, consent.
>
> (*Ham.*, III, ii, 359-365)

It is a pity that the two crucial words of Hamlet's conclusion, "shent" and "seals," have disappeared from general usage and so are lost upon most of us. To shend is

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to berate or strongly reprove, and to seal in this case means to fulfill one's words with actions. The "bitter business" and "hot blood" which occupy Hamlet's mind early in the soliloquy have been transformed into sharp language by its end. He will speak daggers but use none, as he has already demonstrated by his treatment of Guildenstern and Polonius. Harold Goddard has aptly summarized the theme of this sequence of scenes: "scorn is a diluted form of murder."[1] Hamlet's preferred weapon throughout the remainder of the play is to be the word, not the sword.

Displacement and Redirection

Many ethologists would say that Hamlet's verbal assault upon Guildenstern and Polonius is a "displacement activity," or a redirection of aggressive impulses through substitution. It seems to be a common feature of social life among animals that the purpose of intraspecific combat is to gain ascendancy over the adversary, not to destroy him. When animals possessing the capacity to kill members of their own species reach a point in their battles where death would likely ensue shortly, one combatant will frequently turn aside and ferociously attack some nearby harmless object, like a tree or shrub, or in some other way expend or inhibit his killing behavior harmlessly. "Honor" among animals is apparently often satisfied by the safe discharge of aggression as well as by its more lethal expressions, and the battle will normally end with maximum face-saving and minimum bloodletting. Such a happy conclusion is likely to occur, of course, only if an animal is fighting with another member of the same species; wolves do not redirect aggression when closing in on their prey, or they would go hungry even more than they do. Slaughter is necessary among animals only for nutrition; for the acquisition of status and the maintenance of social order, shame and ritualized aggression are more useful.

Animals which live by killing seldom kill their own kind, though they may fight with them frequently. Konrad Lorenz asserts that "there is no single organism capable of self-defence, in particular no large carnivore capable of killing large prey, which does not possess a quite particular system of inhibitions . . . preventing the killing of conspecifics."[2] Moreover, patterns of interspecific and intraspecific aggressive behavior differ markedly, and appear to be governed by different parts of the brain.[3] The distinction between the two types of aggression is of course particularly pronounced among animals equipped with an anatomy designed for killing: "Where one species possesses very dangerous weapons such as teeth or claws, which could easily kill an opponent if they were used, special inhibiting mechanisms have usually evolved which prevent killing of the species member; often the entire fight has become transformed into a tournament. Only rarely do well-armed animals use their weapons against a conspecific without any inhibition."[4]

It is obviously necessary to the survival of any predatory species that predation not be applied to a conspecific, just as it is necessary that the stomachs of meat-eating animals be protected against self-digestion. The case is rather different among non-predatory or unarmed animals, most of which seem to lack strong inhibitions against killing conspecifics, but under natural circumstances these species are usually incapable of killing anyway.

Human Substitutes for Murder

Must we anthropomorphize animals or zoömorphize Hamlet to see a similarity in their use of a displacement activity at a dangerous moment? Certainly those of us who are less symbolically human than Hamlet use his technique often. Judges strike the gavel to their benches when they would like to crack the skulls of lawyers and defendants, wives break glassware rather than their husband's necks, and a ghetto kid may smash a store window rather than risk fighting the boy with a knife in his belt. It takes a very special effort of the mind to pursue a battle where death or serious injury are likely outcomes. Military men and dedicated partisans have long since perfected the arguments which convince people to stand their ground in the face of death, but it seems clearly to be a form of behavior that is unnatural to us since every human generation must afflict it anew upon the next. Given the opportunity, many of our species have always shied away from killing our own kind in spite of our moral training to the contrary. When one is distinctly trapped, fighting to the death may look as good as dying without a fight, but if an alternative is available we are likely to grab at it.

We may ask whether Hamlet is a member of a predatory species blessed with instinctual inhibitions against intraspecific murder. Though this debate is hot just now, the appropriate answer appears to be that he is not. Human anatomical equipment is not well designed for killing, and does not seem to be accompanied by strong, genetically controlled patterns of inhibition against attacking conspecifics. We have made up for our shortage of teeth, claws, poisons, horns, and antlers by our technological inventiveness. Our capacity to kill is mostly a cultural invention, not a natural gift. Unfortunately, we lack the instinctual controls over our weapons enjoyed by other dangerous animals. As Hamlet knows, there was no instinct to prevent Claudius from pouring poison in his brother's ear, and Hamlet's young friend Laertes is instantly ready to shed vengeful blood when he hears that his father Polonius

1. H. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, Vol. II (Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1951), p. 357.

2. K. Lorenz, *Studies in Animal and Human Behavior*, Vol. II (Harvard Univ. Press, 1971), p. 149.

3. "A predator fights differently with a species member than with a prey and by electrical brain stimulation it can be shown in cats that these two types of behavior have different neural substrates in the brain. From areas in the lateral hypothalamus stimulation evokes eating and prey-killing responses. From areas in the ventral and medial hypothalamus stimulation elicits intraspecific ('emotional-type') aggression." I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt, *Ethology* (New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), p. 314.

4. I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt, *Ethology*, p. 315. See also K. Lorenz, "Die angeborenen Formen möglicher Erfahrung," *Z. Tierpsychol.*, 1943, 5:235-409, and K. Lorenz, *Das sogenannte Böse*, (Vienna, Borotha-Schoeler, 1963).

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has been slain. Like our weapons, our inhibitory controls also depend upon culture more than upon instinct.

Hamlet's inherited cultural morality tells him that murder in his situation is proper and appropriate. Somewhere within him, however, is a force which resists and looks for alternatives. He creates displacement activities with his mind when his instincts fail to supply them. Hamlet is an anomaly among heroes because of his strong aversion to lethal violence, though his evasive behavior would seem perfectly normal if we were to observe it in a wolf.

It is true, however, that human aggressive passions are capable of being discharged short of murder. We do have some basic distaste for killing members of our own species, whether its source is genetic or cultural. And harmless or symbolic violence can sometimes release us from the grip of destructive hate, as literary tragedy is thought to do in the Aristotelian theory of catharsis. We seem to share these features with many animals, particularly those complex enough to live a social existence where they must frequently compete with their own kind.

But is it therefore reasonable to conclude that Hamlet's actions following the mousetrap scene are explicable in the same terms as those of a moose who attacks a willow bush rather than another moose? So obvious and simple an explanation would surely have occurred to someone long ago, and the problem of interpreting *Hamlet* need not have filled so many dreary books. But there is nothing obvious or simple about either Hamlet or the moose. The mystery here lies in the wonder that such a thing as redirected aggression should exist at all. Allowing that it does (and the evidence from ethology is compelling) we can consider the further complications arising from the great diversity of its manifestations. Hamlet's verbal murder of his school chum is as far above a wife breaking crockery as the wife is above the moose who suddenly hates willows. All are redirected aggression, and all serve to affirm the value of life above the values of honor and exclusive dominance.

Comic and Tragic Aggression

Seeking substitutes for dangerous aggression is unheroic and anti-tragic. It is a form of action which we are more likely to associate with comedy than with tragedy, with the avoidance of suffering rather than with noble acceptance of it. It is the behavior of Falstaff who feigns death rather than risk battle, or of Don Quixote who attacks windmills and sheep as if they were giants and armies, or of Joseph Heller's Yossarian who makes "evasive action" his moral principle of survival when faced with an enemy bent upon destroying him. Comic heroes consistently devote their energies and imaginative resources to finding alternatives to mortal combat, and are characteristically willing to endure humiliation rather than to kill or be killed. Temporary avoidance of death is a basic goal of comic action; the substitution of non-lethal for lethal combat is its technique.

Throughout most of his play, Hamlet tries to find comic resolutions to his problems. This hopeless search largely accounts for his seemingly inappropriate delay in taking revenge. His initial response to the ghost's demand for revenge is to adopt an "antic disposition" which permits him to proceed by dissimulation rather than by direct aggressive action. From this point until the final scene of the play, Shakespeare shows us a complicated series of scenes of aggression played skillfully by Hamlet on a verbal and symbolic level. The enemy Claudius and his allies—Rosencranz and Guildenstern, Polonius, and Gertrude—are one by one verbally slain. We have already considered one scene where Guildenstern and Polonius feel the sharpness of Hamlet's tongue, and such scenes recur with these characters at several points in the play. Gertrude is reduced to tears of shame and frustration by her son's lecture on the immorality of her remarriage. And the most powerful mock-aggression of all is staged for Claudius in the mousetrap scene with Hamlet interpreting the action so that the point will not be missed by the king. Of this scene, too, Goddard has said, "The play is nothing but a contrivance for murder on the mental plane."[5] Even simple Ophelia is symbolically destroyed by her lover ("Get thee to a nunnery . . .") and she never recovers her balance. Hamlet has been filled with aggressive passion by the legacy from his father, and his action throughout the play is a desperate search for means to discharge that aggression by finding substitutes for murder.

Incidental Victims

Hamlet successfully avoids confronting the genuine object of his aggression, Claudius, until the final scene of the play. Meanwhile, however, his hate proves fatal to others despite his attempts to redirect it. When Rosencranz and Guildenstern are dispatched to escort Hamlet to England where the king has arranged secretly for his execution, Hamlet deftly turns the tables and arranges for his companions to be killed according to the king's plan. Hamlet recognizes that the deaths of Rosencranz and Guildenstern are incidental to the larger conflict between himself and the king:

> 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
> Between the pass and fell incensed points
> Of mighty opposites.
>
> (*Ham.*, V, ii, 60-62)

The same explanation fits Polonius and Ophelia, who also die as unintended victims of Hamlet's aggression toward Claudius. Both are relatively innocent observers of the combat between Hamlet and the king, rather like willows smashed at the scene of battle between bull moose. Ophelia's adolescent perplexity becomes insanity and leads to her death as she fails to cope with the bewildering events around her. Her father Polonius, as Gertrude describes him, is a "good old man" despite his habit of meddling in others' affairs. His inappropriate presence in the queen's chambers at the moment when Hamlet's aggressive passion is at its height (immediately following the mousetrap scene), results in his death by reflex action, not by design.

Hamlet kills Polonius without seeing him, and not as a man but as a rat. Had Polonius been visible as a human being instead of hiding furtively behind a curtain, Hamlet

5. Goddard, *Meaning*, I, p. 364.

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would surely have attacked as usual with words rather than with his rapier, constrained by his consistent aversion against intraspecific murder. Hamlet's hate-filled mind created instantly an image of an animal competitive with man, the rat, which could legitimately be killed.

Pseudo-speciation

Hamlet's murder of Polonius also has its counterpart in animal behavior in another sense. Behavioral inhibitions which prevent conspecifics from destroying one another occasionally break down. Under abnormal conditions which are so far only imperfectly understood, lions occasionally treat other lions according to the patterns of predator-prey aggression, and the normal inhibitions against intraspecific murder seem to be temporarily suspended.[6] Similar behavior has been infrequently observed among wolves and other predatory animals, and seems to occur rather more commonly among rats, especially in densely populated circumstances. Erik Erickson has named this phenomenon "pseudo-speciation," the adoption of interspecific behavioral patterns of aggression inappropriately applied to a conspecific.[7] The clearest examples of pseudo-speciation are to be found in the history of human culture where this remarkable behavior has become institutionalized. Konrad Lorenz remarks that "pseudo-speciation has the consequence that one culture does not regard the members of another as really and truly human. This weakens the normal inhibitions to kill conspecifics and is one of the prerequisites of war."[8] Hamlet's cry: "How now! A rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!" as he kills Polonius is a small but revealing example of the coincidence of pseudo-speciation and murder among humans.

Pseudo-speciation has a long and dishonorable history as a feature of human culture. An early and compelling example occurs near the end of Homer's *Iliad* where the heroes Achilleus and Hektor at last confront one another for battle. Hektor has been chased three times around the walls of Troy before he finally confronts Achilleus in a last vain attempt to reason with his adversary in a civilized fashion. Achilleus' answer is a classic example of the human use of pseudo-speciation:

> Hektor, argue me no arguments. I cannot forgive you.
> As there are no trustworthy oaths between men and lions,
> nor wolves and lambs have spirit that can be brought
> into agreement
> but forever these hold feelings of hate for each other,
> so there can be no love between you and me, nor shall
> there be
> oaths between us, but one or the other must fall
> before then
> to glut with his blood Ares the god who fights under
> the shield's guard.[9]

Achilleus insists that he is a predator and Hektor is his prey of another species, so no constraints to aggression apply. It is a simple logical trick which allows Achilleus to ignore the fact that he and his adversary are both men and so at least theoretically subject to "trustworthy oaths" limiting or ritualizing aggression. Wolves, of course, do not treat other wolves as prey, nor do lions prey upon lions; both behave toward their conspecifics in a relatively polite manner compared to their treatment of prey species, except in those rare instances of pseudo-speciation when they seem to forget that they are dealing with one of their own kind.

Identifying the enemy as an animal is an ancient technique of murderers and military propagandists. Jews were dogs or swine in Hitler's Germany, Americans are paper tigers to many Chinese, the Japanese were as slippery as snakes during World War II, and Lieutenant Calley looked upon the women and children of My Lai as "so many cattle" as he slaughtered them. The recent identification of police officers with pigs has worked to justify similar violence. If an appropriate animal species does not seem to fit the enemy, humans have often invented new non-human species to disguise their conspecific foes: wop, honky, gook, nigger, spic and the host of pejorative names applied to ethnic groups are pseudo-specific categories long used to justify violent behavior. The purpose and effect of these inventions is always to deprive the enemy of the rights and protections normally accorded to other human beings. Hamlet has plenty of cultural precedent for identifying Polonius as a rat just before killing him.

Conventional Blood Revenge

The tradition of blood revenge advocated by the ghost of Hamlet's father is also a cultural invention, not an instinctual pattern shared alike by men and animals. No counterpart for the long chains of family feuding over many generations described in tragic literature is to be found in animal behavior. Biological instinct does not seem to affirm the biblical pattern of "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," nor is there any sign of an animal instinct compelling offspring to avenge the deaths of their parents. Human language and memory alone make it possible to retain and transmit hatreds and fears long after the occasions which produced them have passed.

Hamlet's prolonged inaction is remarkable because it is an implicit rejection of the morally correct norms of his culture which support blood revenge. Shakespeare has provided within the play an example of "proper" (culturally approved) revenge behavior so that we may gauge how far Hamlet's response is from normal. When young Laertes hears that his father has been killed, he promptly collects a band of supporters who proclaim him king, and with this following he bursts into the throne room demanding instant vengeance no matter what the cost:

6. See R. Schenkel, "Zum Problem der Territorialität und des Markierens bei Säugern—am Beispiel des Schwarzen Nashorns und des Löwen," *Z. Tierpsychol.*, 1966, 23:593-626.

7. E. Erickson, "The Ontogeny of Ritualization in Man," *Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc.*, 1966, 772:251B, 337-349.

8. K. Lorenz, "Knowledge, Belief, and Freedom," in P. Weiss, *Hierarchically Organized Systems* (New York, Hafner, 1971), p. 248.

9. Homer, *Iliad*, tr. R. Lattimore (Univ. of Chicago, 1951), Bk. XXII, 261-267.

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Laer.: I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged
Most throughly for my father.
(*Ham.*, IV, v, 131-135)

That is the way a hero ought to be, ready to sacrifice his chances at heaven, the welfare of the state, and any lives including his own which may be required by the code of honor. We shall find no parallels to animal behavior in Laertes' action, for it is unknown outside the context of human culture. Though he proves to have little talent for the role of hero, Laertes at least affirms the traditional model of heroic revenge which is typical of his cultural tradition.

By comparison, Hamlet is a poor example of heroic values. Goethe described Hamlet as "a lovely, pure, noble, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which forms a hero," and found in his story "the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it."[10] Had Hamlet lived up to the heroic expectations of his culture, he would presumably have murdered Claudius as promptly as possible and assumed the throne for himself, rather than experimenting with alternatives as he does. However much Hamlet has been admired by critics and students, most show some embarrassment over his effeminate and unheroic failure to commit murder and they reluctantly conclude that Hamlet is something of a coward. Hamlet's reluctance to kill mocks the heroic ideals of our civilization.

Hamlet's Gamesmanship

Hamlet tries at every opportunity to convert actions into words, violence into argument, murder into a game. He thus reverses the usual processes of human society which generally move in the opposite direction: from word to deed, argument to battle, games to murder. He is a master of redirected aggression and his success at avoiding serious violence prolongs the play and often disappoints the expectations of action-loving audiences. In the end of course he must fail and the audience must be satisfied, not simply because of the conventions of the theater but because Hamlet's evasive strategy is unintelligible and unacceptable to his fellow humans. It would make immediate sense to most predatory animals and evoke from them a like response, but among men it merely inspires the escalation of violence.

While Hamlet manufactures games, his opponents are inventing plans for action. The final scene of the play begins with a duel which Hamlet sees as an athletic contest, but which to Claudius and Laertes is a pretext for murder. Hamlet accepts the challenge to "play with Laertes" in good sporting faith, hoping to win the duel on points, but "if not, I will gain nothing but my shame." Life is not at stake so far as Hamlet is concerned, though he does have a vague intuition that this will not be an ordinary game and thus confesses to Horatio, "thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart." Claudius and Laertes, meanwhile, are preparing for murder and filling the athletic site with instruments of death: an unbated point for Laertes' rapier, poison on the blade, and poison in the wine. In the duel which follows, Hamlet's entire strategy of life as a sophisticated game is pitted against the tradition of life as heroic action, and Hamlet of course loses even though he is a better fencer than Laertes. Hamlet is forced to abandon his animal behavior of redirected violence and adopt the human pattern of violent heroics which can lead nowhere but to violent death. The final result is the destruction of Denmark's most important people: king, queen, prince, and courtier.

Social Responses to Aggression

Tragic literature has frequently demonstrated that prevailing cultural traditions are dangerous and destructive to the welfare of our species. Aeschylus in the fifth century B.C. was as sensitive to the problem as Shakespeare was. Aeschylus' trilogy, *The Oresteia*, examines the theme of blood revenge in detail, searching desperately for some way to avoid the endless chain of destruction as each new generation of leaders assumes responsibility for avenging the wrongs done to their parents. Thanks to the unique human capacity for preserving information, revenge can become a traditional pattern of cultural behavior for an indefinite period, causing the destruction of society's most valuable leaders.

In the final play of his trilogy, *The Eumenides*, Aeschylus celebrates the Greek invention of distributive justice. Personal blood revenge is replaced by a jury of twelve citizens which acts in the name of society as a whole and decides issues of right and wrong according to the welfare of the people rather than by the relative destructive power of the disputants. Aeschylus presents this advance as a triumph of Greek rationality over primordial instinct (Apollo over the Furies). Had he known what has recently been discovered about aggressive behavior in animals and its systems of control, Aeschylus might well have regarded distributive justice as a victory of animal instinct over a destructive cultural tradition.

A legal trial is a communal form of redirected aggression. In the interest of social welfare and survival, it restricts combat between antagonists to a verbal and symbolic level, and it imposes punishments mostly in the form of humiliations and restrictions to free behavior rather than death or physical injury. The long debate over the appropriateness of the death penalty and other "cruel and unusual" punishments is a legacy of cultural blood revenge which the Greeks thought they had ended some twenty-five centuries ago. Deliberate execution of deviant or dangerous conspecifics for purposes of punishment is also virtually unknown in animal behavior.

Animal societies, like some human societies, do occasionally assume group responsibility for preventing battles between strong leaders when a risk of death or serious injury is present. I recently sat on the edge of a Bavarian marsh with Konrad Lorenz watching his flock of some two hundred greylag geese when a serious fight broke out

10. J. W. v. Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. 1796. Tr. by Thomas Carlyle (London, 1851), Bk. IV, Chap. 13.

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between two strong males, Percy and Ado. It was a grudge match, preceded by several months of skirmishing between the two prominent geese, but this time they went too far. With Ado's beak firmly clamped upon Percy's wing, Percy was helplessly receiving terrible blows from his assailant's heavy wings. Percy would not have survived long had he not managed to take sanctuary under the bench upon which Dr. Lorenz and I were seated. The other geese were extremely excited, and several large ganders had begun to interfere with the fight before Percy had reached our bench. Lorenz explained that he had observed such behavior on several occasions during serious fights between rivals, when "all the courageous ganders converged on the battle and proceeded to beat the fighters until they were separated." Lorenz also added that during such fights, "I have to keep myself in leash; I find it difficult not to interfere." The citizens watching helplessly from the walls of Troy must have felt similarly as Achilleus and Hektor fought to the death, and the courtiers of Denmark might have tried to save some of their royalty if the final scene of *Hamlet* had not moved so fast. The social impulse to find alternatives to lethal aggression is as strong as the private need, and it is shared by animals and men alike, though men often suppress such impulses as animals cannot.

Imagination and Instinct

Comparing Hamlet's actions to animal behavior neither degrades Hamlet nor exalts the animals. His problem is an old burden for human ethics: given the human mental capacity for modifying behavioral patterns, how should we express our feelings of aggression? And when cultural morality conflicts with private emotional needs, what resolutions are available to us? The redirection of aggression toward substitute objects has frequently prevented harmful violence among members of our species; it is evidence of sophisticated mental inventiveness, as Hamlet's example demonstrates. Conversely, pseudo-speciation is also a human device which justifies and encourages violence where it might not otherwise occur, and it has long been a cause of extensive human mortality. On the social level, curbs against violent aggression have also been created by human culture in the form of law and distributive justice. Though it is unlikely that these human controls over aggression are manifestations of instinctual patterns in man, it is at least noteworthy that all have their counterparts in animal behavior. With luck and encouragement, perhaps imagination and intellect can serve our species as well as instincts have served the other animals. □

FELIX POLLAK

EVOLUTION

At first, their helplessness
touches your heart as they cling close,
feeding on you for survival.

Having learned to run,
they pick up small rocks to throw at you,
giggling, from ambush.

Later, they pass you on highways,
grinning into their rearview mirrors
at your fast losing.

One day, they lean over you at a distance,
watching you die. And suddenly know
that they, too, are mortal. And look at their
offspring, and weep.

The preacher stands at your coffin
and talks of your blameless life,
not mentioning your father's dying,
with his son leaning over him

at a distance.

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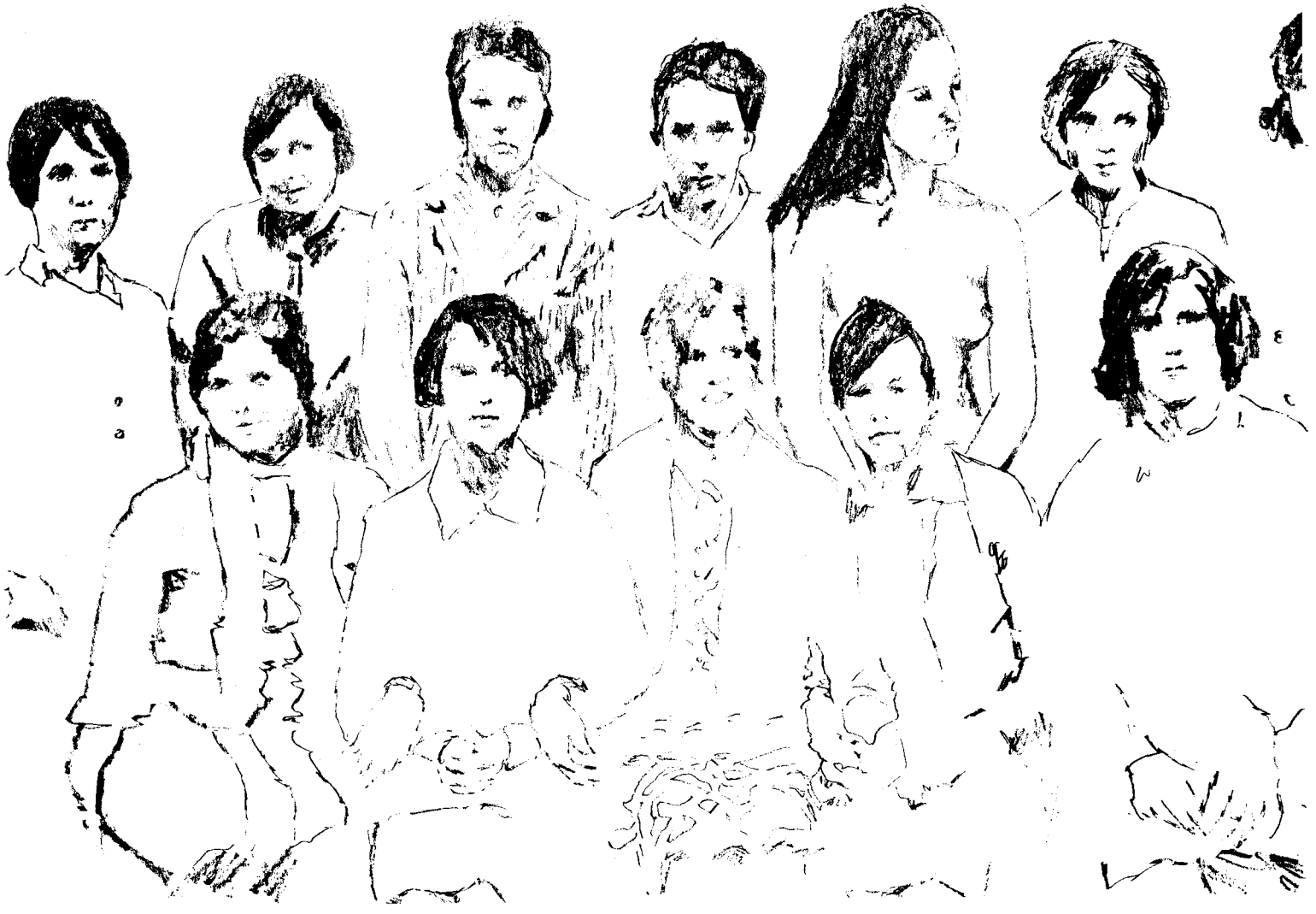
No American publication can fail to be interested in the art of getting ahead—in this instance in the world of higher education. We hope the following pages will be useful to our readers, and perhaps (eventually) to the children in this drawing.



ADMINISTRATIVE STEREOTYPES,

or

Up the Ivory Tower

Advice to the Grovelorn by Richard Brook

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Administrative Stereotypes, or Up the Ivory Tower

Everything that needs saying
Has already been said,
But since no one was listening,
It all has to be said again.
—*Plagiarized*

Shortly before menopause, some college professors begin to look for new troubles. It is a little like looking for a mistress. Things at home seem to be going rather plainly. The adventure that was there in the early throes of wrestling with an academic discipline is long gone by.

Of course, some professors at this point pasture upon their old lecture notes. And others pursue new hobbies. Some more narrowly concentrate on a specialization discovered during dissertation times and address an ever smaller audience each year. Others tire of the thingliness of ideas and start fights with their competitors in convention halls. Some enter politics. And a few enter college administration.

Many of these professors are terrified by boredom. Facts and ideas that had to be mastered in youth become less stimulating over the years. Things like academic disciplines become static beside the complexity of existential human relationships. The action appears to be where the people are. A pure disciplinarian would, of course, reject this professorial loss of Faith. Nevertheless, even professors with the most exciting minds choose administration.

Because of the troubles in the 1960s and the tight money of the 1970s, many new voices are critical of academic administration. The layman and the faculty member squint up at the ivory tower and ask, "Who's minding the belfry?" Among the critics may be a renegade professor seeking administrative adventures. Offered here are a few comments on the stereotypes he has constructed, some cautionary guidelines for developing his own prototype, a few mechanical details about joining the market, and a rundown on interviewing for a job.

Ordinarily the professor in question—let's call him *the candidate*—has his eye on the closest level for advancement, the position of department chairman. Like the average faculty member, he looks at the chairman of his department as if the latter were typically a representative of the administration. Interestingly enough, the administration often looks to the chairman as a sort of super faculty member. The chairman, in any event, is likely to provide at least a moderately reactionary faculty input to middle administration. His behavior, contrary to faculty opinion, may not be characteristic of the administration.

The predominantly dark view of academic administrators replete in the stereotypes fails for the same reason that faculty misunderstand the role of department chairman. The failure lies in the functions that these mental levelings perform.

Layman and student alike often think the stereotypes are good gossip. The average faculty member and the candidate enjoy the stereotypes because these stand for their suspicions. They forget at the same time that no human representative of these types—any more than stereotypes for policemen—exists in reality. Oddly enough, administrators also enjoy the lists, saying to themselves that they indeed recognize the opportunity to fail in some of the fashions depicted. They also realize that each of the stereotypes must represent somebody else. This administrative attitude is about as foolish as the faculty view.

The candidate can quickly eliminate what he does *not* want to become by studying the stereotypes, and by scratching out the bad guys. He can also gather up a few of the good things there. Yet he will still ask, "What are successful administrators like generally?" Let me be Biblical.

All good administrators are divided into two legions. In the first legion are those who successfully service programs in an efficient and fair manner. They are *Maintenance Men.* The second smaller legion is composed of problem-solvers, and they are *Trouble-Shooters.* Both legions are significantly valuable contributors to the culture of any school. The characteristic good ingredients of Maintenance Men appear in several of the stereotypes.

Trouble-Shooters are, however, atypical. That is why they never appear in a list of stereotypes. Trouble-Shooters look for the challenge of a gritty problem and attempt to find a solution in terms of the talents and ethos of the academic community that has bred the trouble. But a Trouble-Shooter survives on a rare diet. Once he has the solution, his interest in his job may wane. Recognizing this, he may look for other puzzles to solve. A watchful superior in this case quickly plants a new obstacle before the Trouble-Shooter—though sometimes, of course, there are not enough troubles to go around. (Industry, on the other hand, always seems to have plenty of troubles. One industry is always busy stealing Trouble-Shooters from another.)

If an academic institution accepts the value of a Trouble-Shooter, there will be a kind of internal mobility assured him, first as he progresses through solutions for a series of problems, and then as he moves on to new sets of problems and perhaps to new offices. However, if the administrative structure is such that he eventually is locked into the maintenance of a program, he may search for new sets of problems in another academic community.

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The candidate must discover whether he is by nature Maintenance Man or Trouble-Shooter, for each of these has his own destiny.

Until academic administration behaves more like the industry that incorporates designs for the detection and mobility of Trouble-Shooters, the ones in academe will behave like roving gypsies. (It is difficult, incidentally, for a Trouble-Shooter to ask in a job interview what he will do *after* he fixes things, because the predominant number of Maintenance Men doing the interviewing will think that he really is not interested in the job.)

Once the candidate has decided what kind of administrator he wants to be, he may decide to go public. Here he confronts the mechanical nuisance of working his way into the market-place. He informs his colleagues, the placement bureau at his alma mater, and a few of the schools he would like to work for. He arranges to attend the right conventions. He also watches the openings announced in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *Journal* of the *American Association of University Professors*, and the Sunday New York *Times*. He writes off to the advertisers that appeal to his imagination. He may even try a direct-mail approach, circulating a snappy letter and a vita to a couple of hundred institutions. Job counselors suggest that this last device produces a six percent firm response. That means a possibility of twelve interviews—too many for any working man. There are also commercial agencies, and if they are good they can be helpful in protecting the candidate from a lot of needless queries. Agencies charge the candidate for this protection in most cases.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE: DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN.

Steward. Conceives of self as shop steward. Roams corridors collecting grievances for officials who reluctantly handle problems of workers. Sponsors "unprofessional" environment. Pragmatic.

Dial-A-Prayer. Gets name for soulful behavior he elicits from faculty members. A listener accessible to all. Does not supply working solutions. Is a therapist, not a leader.

Janus. Always sees things both ways. Tries to help absolutely everybody see things both ways. A gentle fellow who breaks things. Ends up accommodating both sides so well he says yes to everything. Later in dark of night resolves to set things straight with contradictory morning memorandum. At last manages to alienate each member of his staff. Is retired anonymously to classroom where, after much personal suffering, drives students to non-directive insanity.

Delegate. A congressional representative assigned his authority by popular vote and administrative consent. Successfully represents faculty interests at higher levels, and interprets policies for those under his leadership.

First Viola. Encompassing world-view. Sees self in orchestral context, neither carrying lead nor burden. Supplies connection and counter melody for stars. Is chief among those who support the principals. Faculty respects him. Superiors trust him. Helps define mission of entire institution. A forceful guide.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE: CHAIRMEN/DEANS.

Hatchetman. Terminates objectionable people. Assassinates ideas in same way, excising them from discussions in committee. Not remarkably more popular with administrators than with faculty members. Turnover in his department or college is high. Bad for internal morale. Depresses rest of entire institution. Enjoys extended tenure in office by eliminating opponents.

Monk. Difficult to characterize because he is so seldom seen. Closets self away from ordinary activities of college. Persists in best of scribal traditions. Continues with own research, writing, and scholarship. Ignores earlier promise to sponsor scholarly progress of subordinates. Ignores recruitment or salaries. Cannot negotiate with mundane superiors.

Clerk. Not in Chaucer. A paper-pusher with the same habit as his hooked dependents. His own memos are so long and frequent that they tend to be disregarded. Germs of his good ideas are buried in the third and fourth pages of his letters.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE: DEANS.

Price. Cost accountant
of everything and
— an unsympath
demands be
department
of schol
velop

SITIONS AVAILAB
SIDENTS

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Next, the candidate receives a "feeler" from one of the openings. His first contact may come by phone, by letter, or at a convention interview. The first thing the candidate must then define is the school he will be dealing with, regardless of whether he thinks he knows a lot about its reputation. If there is an opportunity, he asks the first contact for recent catalogs, for institutional self-studies like accreditation reports, and for some public form of the school budget.

The status of the first contact is of some preliminary interest to the candidate. If the school has already seen the candidate's credentials, he should expect to be talking with the chairman of the search committee, or with the man he will work for.

If matters proceed to a campus interview, the candidate should assess the level of efficiency reflected in the business of preparing him and the faculty for his visit. This is often a clue to campus interest in the candidate. It also suggests how well the campus has its several heads together. Signs of a business-like attitude include such items as inviting the spouse along, arranging and handling travel for the interview by buying him his plane tickets ahead of time, arranging for a rented car, reserving a room either on or at a convenient distance from campus, notifying him beforehand of the interview calendar, and explaining to him who it is he will be meeting and talking to. The candidate can already make a couple of guesses about the school, just on the basis of the interview structure. If he will see very few people, the school is probably dictatorial. If there are to be a great number of interviewers, the administration is insecure.

Interviews on campus are physical challenges more than intellectual matches. Staying alert through a day or two of fencing with detectives and antagonists burns up blood sugar.

Interviews are not only exhausting, they are frequently misleading. An old friend shook his head after interviewing a candidate for a deanship. On the way to our offices across the mall, he said, "Professors are never trained to look good in an interview. We are trained to dig into a discipline, and search our souls. We never pay much attention to the techniques of public relations or politics. Professors who look good in administrative interviews probably do it by accident." While a nice face and a firm grip may not be so critical to the candidate seeking a research or teaching position, such appearances merit some study by the administrative candidate. The amount of study depends on what he expects his image to do for him once he has the job.

However, this is not a set of instructions for making the candidate look good, or for helping him look more like one of the stereotypes. All we have here is some advice for the candidate who wants to understand what kind of job is being offered to him.

During an interview there is a lot of talking. Some of the talk is important emotionally; we can touch on that later. Some of it stands for ideas. In such a capsule encounter with a school, the candidate has a hard time finding good handles on ideas that have been current on campus between the time of the last catalog and the beginning of the interview. Yet, there is always one set of clues available to every candidate—the *jargon* used by the interviewers, both in formal settings and at lunches, and on those walks between meetings.

Catch words and phrases are signally important, but some of them are as strange to green candidates as clichés are to freshmen. The local coinages should be examined in discussion with the interviewers. Alternatively, such popular jargon as MBO (Management by Objectives) and PPBS (Planning Programming Budgeting Systems) should be researched in the library if they sound strange. Other more common coinages can be a key source of information if they show up with atypical local associations.

What, for example, can such acronyms as MBO and PPBS tell a candidate? If MBO shows up, it suggests that

POSITIONS AVAILABLE: DEANS.

Price. Cost accountant. "Knows the price of everything and the value of nothing" — an unsympathetic view. Sympathetic: demands better cost accounting within departments in order to discover expense of scholarship, courses, programs. Develops talent for cost analysis. His popularity among laymen exaggerated. Faculty feels he is assigned inflated philosophical value by administration in search of nickels.

Seamstress. Promotes new programs or new ideas which are merely fresh patterns for elderly models. Conservation programs, in his hands, come out as ecology programs. Catches enthusiasms of day. Some of his new dresses cost real money and unreasonably consume scholarly energies in stitching.

Bustler. Sponsors frantic activity in and around office. An advocate of wholesale curriculum reform. His changes go deeper than Seamstress but again may not be justified by cost. Affective response of faculty member suggests intimidation. Makes faculty member wonder if course he prepared to teach next term will still be there when class schedule is printed. Administration places higher value on such broken-field progress than faculty. Bustler tells administration that faculty members wither upon an aged curriculum. Subverts professor's historical advantage over courses. Helps students naively believe courses are easier if subect-matter is the only privilege that professor enjoys

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the institution is interested in what business and industry are able to offer academic management.

Also suggested by the use of MBO are mutual goal-setting, and periodic evaluations of an administrator's success. Both are important to managerial morale. It may be obvious that people should be made aware of what their jobs are, and should be consistently evaluated and advised of their progress. Nevertheless, academic administration has been slow to do what every teacher does all his life—score and evaluate his constituents when they finish a term. MBO also suggests to a candidate that people on campus expect to help him figure out his job.

PPBS is borrowed from government, and measures program goals and successes against their costs. PPBS is often mentioned as a defense against legislative requests for a "line-item budget"—the latter idiom being more threatening if the candidate understands from it that a legislative committee could cross out his salary during budget preparations, and even the president could not put the money back again. So the jargon floating around during an interview can give clues to such incidental matters as the definition of a man's salary.

Throughout the campus visit, the interviewers are trying to measure the candidate, while the candidate studies the interviewers in order to find out whether the job will be at all like the job description. During this mutual discovery procedure, and regardless of hierarchical diagrams, the candidate tries to find out if his job will be in the trunk of the tree or out on a limb—that is, will he be a decision-maker or a reporter?

If he is to be a decision-maker, he must discover to what extent his authority matches his responsibility. If these are not equivalent, he should go home. There are some convenient ways to test the authority of the job. For instance, if the candidate's superior hires and fires the candidate's staff members, or if there is no budget for the position, or if the budget is designed and disbursed by somebody else, then the position is merely an ethical influence on the life of the institution, if it is that much.

Another test for the authority-responsibility equation is the staff supporting the position. This includes study of the sub-administrative assistance to the position, the clerical staff size, amount of dollars in student help, and the nature and condition of the equipment in the offices. This may all sound mundane, but these are the tools with which the candidate will be expected to ply his trade, and he ought to find out ahead of time what is in the toolbox.

Once the candidate has tested the job description, he begins to evaluate the ethos of the academic community. He learns the current faculty-student ratio, and then asks how somebody figured it out. Did they include administrators or librarians as faculty members? If the school includes administrators and librarians as faculty members, the ratio could be deceptively impressive. If the ratio is too impressive without padding, the candidate would do well to question the fiscal posture of the school under the expected pressure of the penny-pinching 1970s. If the ratio is low (one teacher to 25 students) the candidate could put that down as a low grade in academic values or as one area for work. Other questions about the values of the school can be answered by examining such mechanical facilities as classrooms, the library and its holdings, the budget for buying new library books of information retrieval facilities, and the sophistication of the computer center.

Academic strength can be estimated through study of student and faculty profiles. The candidate looks at student admission profiles depicting average high school class rank and test scores, comparing these figures to schools he knows more about. The same sort of assessment of faculty strength can be conducted with degrees plus scholarly efforts across departments or colleges. Miscellaneous clues to cultural background come from a study of the student mix—what are the minorities (blacks, women) and how are they represented, and what are the income levels represented among the students. Income is an issue

POSITIONS AVAILABLE: PRESIDENTS.

Now You See Me. Spot checks operations on campus in order to find out if people he has trusted really know what they are doing. Pursues what appear to be minor problems to very bottom in order to discover profundity of management skills. Sometimes does this because he never learned any other way to say hello. Seldom sees faculty during one of his investigations, except when he is terminating a contract. Frowns a lot. Nobody blames him.

Now You Don't. Influence is often quite constructive. A salesman. Seldom seen on campus. His responsibilities are accepted and his authority maintained by second in command. Spends a great deal of time in Washington. Goes to conferences throughout country. Develops new funding within circle of contacts and alumni who get off-campus money for institution. Is an invisible administrator. Is frequently successful until college troubles, like unrest in late 1960s, return him to a campus foreign to his memory. Aloofness from responsibilities may then cost him his job.

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with faculty culture too, so the candidate carefully considers the salary history of the professorate.

Academic vitality shows up in the growing and the dying programs. The candidate asks which is the latest program added, and what happened to the weakest the last time the budget was redesigned. He discovers how the curriculum is changed, and who participates in making those changes. Do the changes meet needs, or do they reflect power politics, or mere juggling?

Faculty turnover and student attrition are keys to campus morale, although professors right now are holding on to jobs they would have scuttled a few years ago. Another clue to morale is the sample problem presented to the candidate during question and answer sessions. The sample problem usually appears after "What would you do if . . .?" These "samples" almost always derive from recent campus history. The same thing really happened and the fellow asking the question did not like the solution. As he answers, the candidate tries to discover something of the emotional tenor of his audience while he works his way to an "imaginary" solution. Other morale indicators are the amount of free-talk time with candidate-selected people, the recent minutes of AAUP meetings, and the record of negotiating groups such as the AFT or a company union.

The economic strength of the school is a more important consideration today than it was ten years ago. The candidate learns the sources of funds for the institution, as well as their history. He asks for a financial prognosis, finding out at the same time if student money will be exploited to keep the doors open. Economic posture is revealed, too, in the modernity of campus data-handling and communications. Dictaphones, Xerox machines, committee-phones, and typewriter computer-terminals are no longer gadgets. They are tools to tell managers what they need to know to make decisions. An administrative sensitivity session, after all, is a poor substitute for an accurate list of encumbrances when the end of the biennium nears.

The candidate's economic morale is affected by salary. He wants to find out what the school will pay him now, what the record of raises has been in the past, what the school will pay for moving his household, what his fringe benefits are, and, for the future, what kinds of expenses are covered by his office budget. Here a sober fact confronts the candidate. He learns that the institution will not pay what the man is worth, but will pay only what the job is worth, with some small latitude depending on the aggressiveness of the candidate and the flexibility of the negotiator. Toward the close of the interview, the candidate makes a mental inventory of what he has learned and runs through a last check to see if he has picked up enough information to make generalizations. A check-list could cover at least three general late-in-the-interview areas.

Job History: What happened to the candidate's predecessor? Did he die? Did he advance? How long have other administrators been in their positions?

School Image: The public image of the school probably does not match its self-image, but just what is the fit between the two? A chat with a salesman in a local furniture store can provide a little information and some community feelings. A discussion with several knowledgeable colleagues can, of course, offer estimates of the school image in the trade.

Governance: The candidate has been picking up clues all through the interview, but a last general question must be addressed to himself: What does he think is the true governance structure of the institution? Who really runs the show? the faculty? the administration? the trustees? the legislature? (One nervous response from a South Dakota interviewee: "The Business Manager.")

Of course, no candidate gets all the information he wants or needs in order to make his decision. Even after the first year on the job he will not get some questions answered, and others will never be answered.

Back home again, the candidate at his leisure begins to sum up what he has discovered from his library study, his catalog reading, his pre-flight preparation for the interview, the answers to his campus questions and probings, and his most general reactions to the campus gestalt.

A few negative reactions to some of his considerations will not entirely discourage him. After all, he may not plan to set down his roots and stay for life. A range of negative features could be tolerated for a few years. The question is whether the positive aspects of the challenge outweigh the negative. In some cases, the negative aspects may be the very features of the job that appeal to the candidate; they are precisely the things he knows how to fix.

Some aspects can be rationally evaluated by the candidate. Yet all along he has been making an emotional evaluation that has given him both good and bad signals. If there is negative input, and the candidate still is fascinated by the possibilities, he may want to say yes to the job anyway. If this happens, what it all comes down to is the fact that a good emotional reaction, in spite of a number of rational negatives, ought to be measured for what it is: a set of positive reinforcements that resists conscious consideration.

"If the emotional test is valid", the candidate can well ask, "then why go through the rational inventory suggested above?" One answer is that the checklist offers him a guide to known tender spots. Questioning in those areas gives him a chance to test his feelings against the projected situation. The candidate using the questions picks up myriad emotional clues that are knotted into and lofted along with the campus talk.

As he finally sums things up, the ultimate question that the candidate asks himself is: "How much am I willing to take in order to help people be themselves?"

His answer ought to show that he sees the humor in the question, and anticipates the irony of his predicament. □

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DOUG FLAHERTY

CERBERUS

All night my life is carried
on the triune-tongue of wolf

on the back of the wind
in grains of sand within sand

All night I have hacked
his three yelping heads

to loose from tongues
the language of blood

First head says to read
fate from my intestines

my womb spun from the
path of all convergence

The second head tells me
to smell the trail of woman

and be born each cycle
as father to myself

I have waited for years
like mad monks in caves

without a stock of grain
the chrysalis of prayer

Each new day floats
butterflies without wings

Mother of fishers-of-men
ready the final birth mark

while the third head mimes words
which only the wind-eaten sphinx

could decipher from stones
trapped forever like gossip

I dream of hermit days
on the shore of Atlantis

where even fish hooks
are tame as white feathers

All last night hailstones
beat the dark earth clean

like burned-out planets
the ovaries of cold birth

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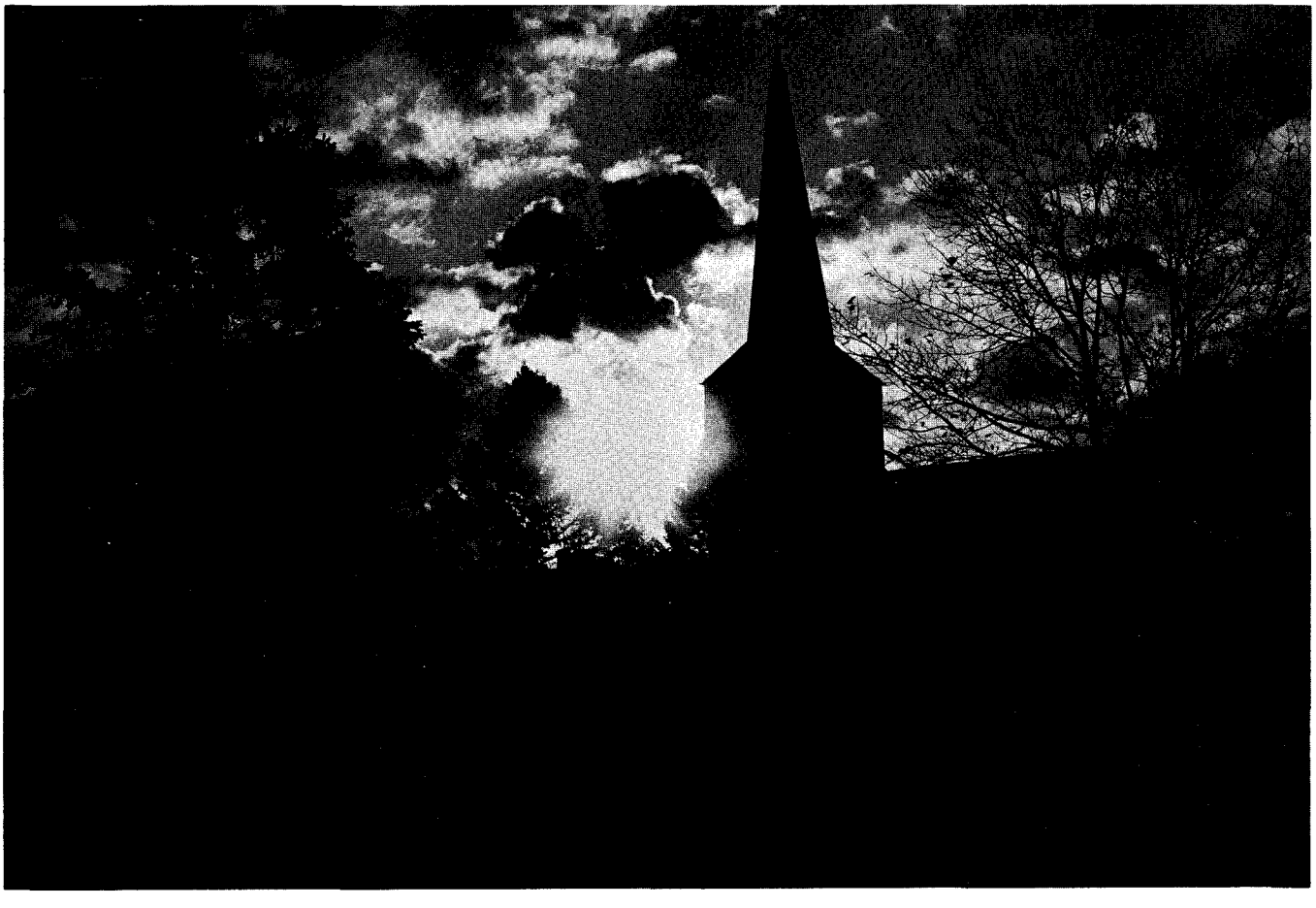
ROBERT SCHULTHEIS

GODS OF AMERICA



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1.

This happened near Abilene, Kansas, in the summer of 1967. I was heading west in a big old Buick sedan that rolled along, smooth as a boat, at 70. The radio sang c&w, quoted hog prices.

Diane of the Queens was by my side: green-eyed city girl with a great smoke of hair, pale brown, smiling her bitterroot smile, chainsmoking. We were going to northern California, to the Siskiyou Range, to live. To build a cabin in the rainforest, and live. The back of the car was full of sleeping bags, tarpaulins, oilskins, boots, lanterns, spirit lamps, freeze-dried foods, sacks of flour, frying pans, psilocybin, rifles, harpoons, blueprints for kayak and coracle, natural childbirth; little red book. I had my Teamster's card in my pocket, and aimed to drive logging trucks. We were free.

It was a summer afternoon. The sky was heaped to the lid with white furnace clouds, and black clouds, dark as jade, heavy as iron, that flickered with electricity, sinister.

The air was still. The trees turned down their great heart heads.

"Where do we get to tonight?" Diane asked.

"We'll be in the Rockies by dawn—up on the high passes. Tomorrow we'll cross the Great Basin, where the rivers just turn in on themselves and die. Maybe we'll camp in the Wasatch Mountains, good wet aspen valleys there."

"Ooo." Diane had never been west of Cheesequake, New Jersey.

A line squall had formed in the west. It reached down a clump of mist.

The mist began to turn, slowly. As it turned, it became solid, and rooted itself to the earth. It became a funnel, with hard edges, mass.

It spun there slowly, dark, arrogant. Then it began to move across the land.

"Jesus Christ!" Diane exclaimed. "What's that?"

"It's a tornado."

"Jesus. Is it going to hit us? It's not, is it?"

"I don't know. You never know, that's the thing about tornadoes."

"Jesus." She leaned forward, squinting through the windshield. "I've never seen anything like that. It's terrible. Look at that mother." She took a quick nervous hit of smoke from her cigarette. "We don't have things like that in New York. I don't see how people live out here."

"There was a tornado on Staten Island in 1823," I said. "And another one in Brooklyn, Red Hook, in 1901. And funnel clouds have been reported on Long Island, out beyond Hicksville, as late as 1949. But they were all real small."

"Yeah, small ones. Nothing like this. Not in New York."

"And not since 1949 *either*," she added triumphantly. Her accent was heavy, like New York itself.

The tornado approached us. I slowed the car, and pulled over. I turned off the engine.

The tornado walked through the dark farmlands and the dark groves of trees toward us like a mad old magic man in black.

The tornado stopped, barely a hundred yards away. He stood in the middle of the field, spinning slowly. The tall grass beat crazily. Clods tore off and were whisked up into the terrible belly, reduced to shadows.

All about us it was still. The air was almost too thick to breathe; I had to bite off mouthfuls, chew and swallow them. Diane took my hand.

The god danced there, solemnly. He swayed, a megaton of cobras, deadly.

Suddenly, without warning, he began to whirl at a tremendous speed. He began to move. He roared away to the east. He merged into the sullen darkness.

We walked out into the field where he had been. The air smelled strange, raw: of hot circuits, and ions.

We walked across the great field, through the tall grass. We came to the place where the ground was bruised, the grass battered down flat, the earth wounded, black earth oozing up. It looked like something had been buried there, and then dug up. The air was loud with a diamond silence.

Without a word—with just one look, of pure understanding—we took off our clothes, tore them off madly; and made love there, on the beaten wild grass, in the electric air, where the god had danced.

2.

I knew a girl—a black pill freak, strung out on the black pills, the deadly ones. She lived in a tiny apartment, empty except for a television set, a bare cot, and a picture of Rasputin on one wall. The picture of Rasputin was very old, in an ornate silver frame. The photograph was dark and moody. Rasputin's eyes followed you everywhere in the room.

She claimed that the Gods of America were out to get her: steroid-popping giants, dripping bitter amphetamine blood, clacking their iron beaks, reeking of burnt rubber and high-octane gas.

She said she had been to the "horsewhite land of madness"—and there they had stolen her soul, leaving an empty hole at her center, a hole she tried to fill with the slag ions of television, and the blank time of the pills. "It's better than nothing." And she made a face out of several television images, a Victorian princess with eplanthic eyes, a birdbone through her nose... swastikas tatooed on her cheeks, an ingenue smile... But it began to disintegrate almost immediately, into sizzling, inchoate blobs of monochrome, horizontal distortion, wobble: "Sunspots," said the tight, torn voice.

"Network Difficulties.

Please do not adjust your sets."

Her image sucked into darkness; darkness of angry gods.

When last heard from, ROBERT SCHULTHEIS was on his way to Nepal to study Buddhism.

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A STORY BY E. M. BRONER

THE FREAKS SPEAK

I. Banners and Flagging Spirits

I *disappear. If anyone looks at me, I become invisible. If there is a strong step heard down the corridor, it grinds me to a shadow under the shoe. Since I am invisible, I can clearly see everyone here.*

Between the jaws of a snapdragon I place my finger; toothless gums close, yet at night when a head drops off, the jaws gape open; end of the dragon. As children we'd bag bees in that mouth, carrying stems of bees about the garden. From the dragon's throat would issue a buzz.

Who is there? He's in a wheelchair sobbing. It's old Doctor Sniderman who wouldn't go to OT and had to have shock therapy. Now Dr. Sniderman plays Break the Bank at Adult Games. He recognizes me, but how can that be if I'm not here?

At night they take all breakables away, the wrist-slashables, the cords for hanging from the radio, hair-dryer, and shaver. They come for my eye-glasses, eye-liner, my *Eau de Vent Vert*, my mirror. They lift sprays of cymbidium from the crystal vase, taking crystal and bringing back orchids in plastic. A Day Nurse took the canning jar that held my snapdragons. In a wide, low carton drooped the dragons on their bellies. Daisies broke their stems. The shasta's long green leaves turned under. A yellow rose needled with its scent like a mosquito, then closed and shrugged off petals.

In order to see me, she, across the hall, puts on two pairs of glasses at the same time.

"Tell me what you see in the ink blot test."

"A pair of black spiders carrying green banners."

"Do you always see peculiar things?"

"What's peculiar about a spider carrying a green banner, holding a blade of grass aloft?"

If I'm the Rorschach test that nasty man gave me at morning rest, I'll open petals, rub against him with my stamens, walk across his eyes with insect legs.

I didn't tell him the flagpole painter flicked his brush at me and splattered my window silvery-grey. He can see the flag limp on this hot day, the stripes twisted like a barber pole, but can he understand a returning wave—I from the 4th floor hospital window—the painter atop the pole?

He rolled my answers into his pocket, but the folded Rorschach rubs its own stain; a fly rubs its legs, and I blot against the world looking for my missing shadow. Cherubim, bats, a butterfly and I are at the window, spreading wings to dry.

They take me to OT.

"Make a collage," says OT Lady. "Cut out pictures from *Woman's Day*, *Town and Country*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Holiday*, *House Beautiful*, *Mademoiselle*, *Lady's Home Journal*. I am never the color of those magazines. If I'm not cerise, crimson, cerulean blue, my own color won't do. I accept community, not OT.

Mr. Rorschach is impatient to take his leave but waits for me to apperceive. (1) "Farewell," the old grandfather yells. His young grandson sleeps and never hears the screams. (2) "What's that you're doing? Don't do it anymore," my mother forbids as she opens my door. (3) Figures weep on half-bent arms. (4) A woman pleads, "Don't leave me, my darling. I'm so charming!" Who am I, from (1) to (4)? The child that sleeps through family screams? That daughter that brings shame upon her house? The disgraced, deserted? How did they know, those black-and-white cartoon creatures with purposefully blurred features, those inert, half-clad women, those people sinking to their knees—how did they know all about me?

At Community Sing, Max sang, "I'll Be Loving You Always." He forgot the words except for "love" and "always." Max used to be an entertainer; "love" and "always" booms down the corridor. Tonight is Scavenger Hunt. A knitting needle (plastic), a sock with hole, our scattered wits. The winner wins a ball-point pen shaped like a cigar.

In the Hunt were winners and losers. I lost and that night had a nightmare. I was smiling at my bedside flowers, pink rose buds, yellow mums, white baby's breath, when they exploded in garish showers and death skulls. They became floral novae, constellations, orifices of stars and flowers, convulsing. So did I. One vast shudder. I had aborted. I rang Night Nurse. "You've been perspiring," said she. She didn't see the baby, which was crying. She thought she heard a bird.

E. M. BRONER has just completed a year's leave from Wayne State University, and spent the time working with writers in Israel.

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"Where is my bird?" Mrs. McCullough asks on her own scavenger hunt. "My father doesn't know where I am," she tells Night Nurse at the desk.

Her father's been dead thirty years.

"Write him a note," says Night Nurse and hands her a sheet of hospital stationery.

"My mother doesn't know where I am," says Mrs. McCullough, long long an orphan, but only now a widow.

"Write her, too," says Nurse.

"My car doesn't know where I am," but this Night Nurse knows and answers firmly.

"Your car is in the parking lot out back."

I am surrounded by old men and old women. Even my buds ripen and drop petals in this over-heated room. An Old Woman, two doors down, calls, "Nurth! Nurth!" She's without her teeth, bedridden, and sitting on a metal wreath of a bedpan. Her bedpan glides from under her and slams the floor. I shout. I laugh. Night Nurse on intercom damns her. Someone else retrieves the pan, but Old Woman, on intercom, grieves for her teeth, her dog at home, her daughters she just spoke to on the phone. I go in, since she can't see me, and sing her a funny song, since she can't hear me. I sing about Lady Bug away from home while the house is on fire and daughters are burning. The Old Woman eats comforting chocolates and churns through fluted brown wrappers. Her candy box falls. I leave. She tries tapping on the metal bedstead for Nurse, but Nurse will hear the code and curse her and all the bedridden down the hall who make her carry pills, who call her, who call.

Max is singing "love" and "always" while Mrs. McCullough paces the corridors and cannot say the name of husband.

Who calls out of beat? Mrs. McCullough, Max, Old Woman, sad Doctor Sinderman and I, of this addressless street. We shuffle, shadowless, unseen, unled. What do we do then? Crawl from rising back to bed.

Late. The men settle down to pinochle, the women to Scrabble.

"Look what word I got," says Mrs. Pisano. "G-O-D!"

"God is good," says Mrs. Berg. "He'll watch over you."

"Yeah?" says Mrs. Pisano. "What good is He? God's only four points."

If God had come to me on hind legs, lain with me, I would have known Him, but I've never had a visitor.

"What room am I in?" Mrs. McCullough is back. "Am I a guest in your house?" she asks Day Nurse. "Will you sleep in my room tonight?"

Mrs. McCullough used to teach French and English.

In striped pants, thinner than a stripe, Mr. Ardwine cries, "I hurt! My behind hurts from those needles; my feet hurt; my head hurts, call the police."

He has signed himself out AMA—against medical advice—and he will leave at noon tomorrow.

"I'm happy," he sobs. "H-A-P-P-Y."

The nurses advance with needles.

"Fuck you," he sobs. "F-U-C-K."

A New Old Lady comes on 4th Floor. She is weeping, so I read her fairy tales—Blue, Green, Red, but, especially, Black. I tell her that we in this mysterious land are trussed together feet and hand. We're assigned tasks—from sweet pulp we're to scrape the bitter rind. We're assigned nationality for we're same of kind. The mind's rites connect us. Further tasks are given to us. We're to eat ourselves with spoon and fork, and from our blood remove the cork and that, dear lady, is our daily work.

We picnicked outdoors 4th of July under oaks, a birch whose top branch has died, and a silver elm. Others were in the park, a red-haired mother and her two red-headed daughters. A baby boy came by wearing baseball insignias on his jacket, Size 3, shiny as a jockey.

Little Mrs. Giroux said, "I bet your name is Bobby."

He ran off. She, blue eyes smiling, remembered her own Bobby.

Mrs. Giroux had cried four days and four nights, then awakened to water her plants. She put snap into my sagging snapdragons. Mr. Ardwine came in. The broken-stemmed daisies distressed him. He had an emery board for strength and found forbidden string to tie the daisies.

I thought I had been tied into the chair. I sat there and didn't move. When I rose, I thought the chair rose with me. But I floated above the chair into the sickroom plants, perching white on a cloud of giant white petunias, nuzzling a baby breath, flicking a purple sugar daddy, climbing a climbing rose. I looked behind the shadowed sun for red and orange of galaradia, petaled a daisy, pinked a double pink. I tell you I was wild with joy among tame garden flowers! "Stop her," called Mr. Rorschach. "Bring her down." They ran with the butterfly net. I still smell of embalming fluid.

The children in the park float on bikes, on swings, on our memories they bob after we're escorted to the 4th Floor, no more than four at a time on one trip. One day we'll picnic out like others do. We'll slice meat and watermelon, dripping red on redwood tables. We'll send up smoke from barbecues and seat the generations around the clear table of our memories.

Extra nurses are added after each visiting day. Mama came and twisted her ring. Daddy, in the parking lot, honked for her.

Mr. Ardwine is scatalogical at dinner and tells a bowel movement story, a urine soup joke. I cannot eat my soup. Mr. Breen limps to another table. Mr. Ardwine's eyes are cloudy, his head is skeletal, a death's mask, or like looking in the mirror of our former dressing tables.

Sonya laughs. "It isn't fair," she says. "They let the women who tried to kill their husbands go home before they let the ones who tried to kill themselves go out on pass."

She's the second group.

It was my turn for home visit. "No," I said, "I pass."

"My bird doesn't know where I am," says Mrs. McCullough. "Who will clean his cage?"

We gather around Mr. Breen to make him eat his dinner.

"We'll phone your bird," Sonya says to Mrs. McCullough.

Mrs. McCullough fixes Mr. Ardwine's silver cuff link that is slipping through.

The bird at home sings without his missing mistress. The flag climbs up the shining silver pole. It spreads stars in daylight. Pairs of spiders lift their green banners. From the throat of a snapdragon buzzes a bee.

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"Go where you will," says Doctor, Mr. Rorschach and Mommy. I pack my chair, my flowers of nightmares, the Blue, Green, Red, Black Fairy Tales, my invisible cloak, the flag-pole painter's wagging hand, the TAT community, my collage from OT, Mrs. McCullough's canary, the metal bed-pan wreath for holidays, chocolate candy. I steal Break the Bank and Scrabble from evening play. I steal Bobby the jockey, my daddy's horn, Mr. Breen's soup. I, the thief, prepare to leave. Surrounded by booty, I am finally visible.

No longer flagging in spirit, I snap in the wind of my own country.

II. A Young Boy Learns to Type

i.

Cook. Morrison. Trytten. Whale order him not to fail, teach his fingers to spell, tap them until they curve and walk across the keys. Make him stop if he looks up when using the shift lock.

In the margins they've splayed the hands. Each is a general who commands half the keys. The same finger is always used for the same key. Even at rest the hands are alert, wrists up, ready to strike at other keys. From its home base key each finger darts above and below its base. To guide each finger safely back home, you keep another finger of the same hand snugly close to its home base, "anchored," we say, to give maximum striking power and speed within this typing hour.

There he is. With a twist of his wrist he tosses the carriage back, zips his left hand to its home base position. For electric machines, he raises the little finger of the right hand and stabs the return key.

He will learn to adjust, sit properly, strike correctly the alphabet keys of the Underwood, Remington, IBM, the Royal. His hands will never touch dirt, never drag in water, no longer fight the wind with a kite for he must learn "Wise Spendsmanship," "Business at the Bank," "Free Enterprise," "Selling his Ideas," and all the lies that make for "Clear Communication."

ii. He controls the Alphabet Keys A, S, D, F, and J, K, L

lad lad dad dad sad sad fad fad dad
ask; ask; asks asks lass lass sass sass
ask all dads, ask all lads; ask a lass;
a dad falls, a lad falls; a lass falls;
as sad as; sad as a lass; sad as a lad;

I told my father my GWAM.

"Guam?" my father asks, "Where we fought those brown little yellow men?"

"Gross Words a Minute," I tell Dad.

My father says, "I type faster with two fingers than you with both hands."

We race. My GWAM is 15, no errors, my father's 35, one error.

"Check your posture," my father suggests. "You sit rooted in the kitchen chair or else your chin rests on the table like a tired face of a flower that can't support the weight of its own petals."

iii.

Cook. Morrison. Trytten. Whale will most certainly prevail, teach him to evenly space his thoughts, to hold his head erect, to keep his shoulders back and relaxed, to center his body opposite the J-key. He will learn to back up until he's a hand span from the machine. He will learn to sit like a man.

iv.

I spilled the water glass at the table.

My Dad said, "Not so rigid. Your arms and elbows—let them hang loosely. Your fingers—curve them as though you're grasping a handle bar. Your back—"

I feel my father's finger there and sit up the straighter.

"As for your knees," he says, "Do not ever cross them or you will fail Father, Cook. Morrison. Trytten. Whale."

jell jell sell sell dell dell fell fell
dull dull gull gull full full lull lull
see a flag; see a sale; see a glass jug
sell a flask; sell a lake; sell a glass
all deeds fall due; all sales fall due;
a sea gull falls as a lad sells a flag

One night, late, when they were out, I saw the flag and then the dark TV.

"When the flag stops waving," said my dad, "The world will go dark like the TV."

a flag gags a lad as a fad lags.

I see coffins wrapped in flags.

A sea gull falls as a lad sells a flag;

v

Left thumb close to forefinger. Right thumb above space bar. Feet apart and flat on the floor, evenly now like music, evenly, tap baton stick, short, sharp pecks of a woodpecker's bill; short, sharp blows, sit straight,

Hit the Keys—*ill ill* and *kill.*

vi

Ed feels all fall sales are fake sales.
A deer fears a gale.

My bath. My father washed my hair with dandruff remover.

He said, "Get in the tub now."

He scrubbed the hair, like splinters, off the back of my neck.

"What's this?" he said and smiled.

I had some new hair.

"You're still very small," my father said, "for your age. The hair's coming in slow."

He thought about it. "Maybe that's why you still act like a baby." There's an old carriage in the garage in which we keep the garden tools, I emptied it; the wheels were like spools racing down the side drive. I sat in it, all drawn up, one spring day. It stopped on the grass before it reached the curb, crushing some bm from the dog next door. My father made me clean the wheels

No, I said, the man was not paid for that day off.

and put it back in the garage with the

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I was the one who told the man he got no day off.
garden tools, although it wasn't my fault.
I pay the man to do a job, not to take a day off.

My dad clipped my hangnail yesterday; I have a new one on the other hand today.

ask; ask; asks asks lass lass sass sass

I went to bed and he sat on my sister's bed. The hall light was on.

He could see her clearly, but the light shone in my eyes, and I had to turn my back to the door.

a dad falls, a lad falls, a lass falls;

She ran away. They brought her back but she hasn't changed, not at all. I see the blue suitcase still packed, straining, waiting like a dog, in the front hall.

as sad as; sad as a lass; sad as a lad;

We talk and her voice turns on full volume like her clock radio in the morning. She buzzes me warnings as we clear the table. I scrape into the garbage disposal. Once she turned it on when I wasn't expecting. The spoon fell in and came out pitted.

"I'm sorry," she said.

With millions of words in our language, it's a shame that most of us pick on just a handful of them and use them over and over. Humanize your writing. When you inject more people into your writing, you humanize it and make it more fun to write and to read.

When you come to class, now don't whisper, don't ask questions. Just check the position of the paper guide. Check to make sure on which side is the line-space regulator before you insert a sheet of paper. Place the paper bail against the paper. Don't be a key-peeker. Make the keys bounce back. Are your wings down? Your elbows in?

AA alas bb baby gg gag
hh hush jj join kk kick
ll loll mm maim pp peep
UU undo vv view
undo view undo view undo view
yy year zz zero
undo view of zero

Winter is coming. I'm still practicing.

His boots crunch the leaves on the frozen ground.

All night my mind makes a clattering sound.

III. Visit to the Cyclopes

It has all been destroyed. Yet where was the battle? Athens? Saigon? At home? The madman remembered....

On our way back from battle, we journeyed to a land of fierce, uncivilized people.

"Stranger," they said, "You must be a fool or from very far away to preach to us of fear or reverence for the gods."

The rain watered their vines, the wind sowed their wheat and barley. They had "*no assemblies for the making of laws nor any settled customs but lived in hollow caverns in the mountain heights.*"

It had not always been so, unless the one we captured lied. His eye was cataracted, his speech was full of tongue, one thumb was stunted. He was uglier than men, shorter than giants and he warmed his hands in his crotch.

He showed us a crater dug by the flexed head of Earth-Mover. Once habitations had stood there. He remembered a stucco grey with slate steps and dormer windows. In another house, a small window was opened, airing the attic.

He was witness to it all.

Ice had almost melted on the front steps. A basement half-window was cracked, the rest intact. Snow was scalloped on the roof, and the entrances were columned and portico'd.

He wept. We shoved him with our toes to speak.

"The bushes were bare," he said. "The cement walk to the side door was swept clean."

As he told his tale a brute attacked our group. We cried out but the *cruel brute made no reply. Instead he jumped upon us and reaching out towards my men, seized two of them and dashed their heads against the floor as though they had been puppies. Their brains ran out on the ground and soaked the earth.*

(Our informant sat in shadow.)

"Limb by limb the brute tore my men to pieces to make his meal, which he devoured like a mountain lion, never pausing till entrails and flesh, marrow and bones, were all consumed."

(Our captive pointed out an unused cave. There were many of them. He crept after us, his arms longer than his trunk.)

"I watched them fall," he said at last, "although it was inaccurate to say they fell. The derrick ate its way down on one side, striking the roof, grabbing what fell as it fell. Floors were lifted like toothpicks in the teeth. The dark-stained hardware floors fell as fast as raw lumber. Mouthfuls of unchewed wall poured into a shuddering truck."

He remembered and leaned back against a rock. His elbow was roughened from such leanings.

"Someone fat tended that fire," he said. "I heard the fire creak like a rocker that needs oiling, or as the floors must once have creaked."

We built a fire and burnt our cheeks as he continued to speak.

"The face-brick red was powdered white," said he. "The lattice sagged. Cracked cement chunks of walk led to no side door. The bricks fell with less noise than one would have supposed as teeth clamped on flesh of brick and bit through lattice bone.

He asked us a question. "Why did smoke come from that chimney? Was it brick dust? Or the last thin expiration, the sound a man makes when he's let down?"

We did not know.

"I hardly blamed the cadmium yellow truck," he said, "The Federal Construction Works, when I watched the pincers turn. It worked so smoothly on its tractors, its aim was blunt yet accurate."

He stared at the ground. "Into the unseen basement it dived, lifting the basement stairs. I watched the man with the pike, in dark jacket and red cap, in waterproof galoshes, uncrooking the stairs in the trembling green truck. Then the derrick chewed its way down as if it were eating chicken. It climbed back up plunging through slipping shingles, roof boards, loosening its teeth to bite again."

He was silent. We poked at him with sticks.

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"I think it was then," he said, "we thought of human flesh, but first we had to smash their habitations."

He became sleepy watching, sleepy from our fire, sleepy from memories of past destruction. It was monotonous—broken bricks, small fires around craters, that rocking green truck.

"The truck cab was empty," he said. "The driver got out long ago. The truck could almost work without a driver."

He remembered the day of the empty cab, when snow fell like coarse salt.

He went on. He talked slowly. We listened less.

"The houses became smaller and Federal Construction less careful," he said. "Once you've had one house, you've known them all."

Again a pause.

"I remember a front door of large, sectioned panes. Smaller panes climbed with the posts and ran across the lintel. I waited then for the final tinkling, for Poseidon's sound, a boat sinking with goblets smashing, with mirrors crashing, a Titanic sound." His voice rose. We were bored.

"All windows were empty of glass," his own eyes opened wider. "They were opened in winter, opened in horror, watching their own engorgement!"

The fool wept.

"The building next door was smaller, one floor less. On the door was a nailed note. We always first nailed a note. Oh, Zeus, it was a warning."

We began to laugh at the crouching monster.

"Again, an empty truck drove up. The green truck had left. The man with the red flag who had directed the cadmium yellow Federal Construction Works had left. But always a new truck drove up."

People began to imitate his snorting speech.

He wept, but not at us, I think. "So little effort," he stuttered, "to k-k-kill a house. How much for a hut, a shack, the thatched roofs behind the mountains? The derrick hardly had to swing. It leaned."

He told us of Open House, while we roared, walls removed to reveal a cream wall on the third floor, a fresh white wall on two, the floor-to-ceiling picture openings.

A rumbling like a waterfall outside the cave—the monster outside had searched out our hide-away.

He picked up a huge grey stone and placed it in the doorway; not two and twenty good carts with four wheels apiece could have lifted it off the ground.

We heard a wild goat bleating in the distance, and our men screaming in his fists. I pressed my own fists into my eyes and opened them only once—when I heard a soft blowing sound; he blew out the entrails and sucked them in like noodles. He ate the manflesh and *we could do nothing but weep and lift up our hands to Zeus in horror at the ghastly sight.*

We were helpless and yet not. The monster had gone and sealed our exit with another rock. But our captive, moving slowly, his voice a growl, his knees hair-covered, had yet a memory of man, of homes, of assemblies that made laws, of settled customs.

He felt the rock, then pushed with fingers and shoulder until both were scraped and covered with blood. But we had no pity for even our blood had been licked from the floor. He wedged his thumb, the shorter one, between the boulder and the dirt wall, and, like Poseidon Earth-Shaker, he tore away the cavern wall.

We shoved him aside in our rush to the waterway.

"Sailors!" he cried, "Sailors, stay!"

But we rowed while his voice made a tidal wave in our ears.

We saw him last in a clearing, uglier than men, shorter than giants. He lay himself down in a crater of what had once been a house. Far above, his brother brutes hurled granite upon him and buried him from their view and from ours.

IV. Man Beset by Woman

i

Her hand against my face; I kiss the palm. If I smile, and not a foolish smile, will she hold my hand until I breathe, and breathe

(he sighs, breathes)

to sleep? The spiders, the giants, the big black ants that come in from the drainpipe, the open closet door! The stairway leading to my room, the insect buzz of the fan, and I in my upper bunk lie without protection. My brother sleeps too still, and when I look over the guard rail, down at him, he's no warrior, no help at all.

She sings sometimes to the baby,

(voice nasal and nasty, mocking "Rockaby Baby")

OOGY, OOGY, LALALALA.

(Bitter.)

She brings her water, another glass of water and the last upstairs kiss.

I'm not allowed water at night or I dream I'm standing in front of the toilet.

The ceiling is too close from this upper bunk. I see every spider's web, and if I tell her, "Look, ma, there's a web," she thinks I'm complaining about her housework. She's still with the baby and my scab itches, it itches, ma-ma-ma-a—my scab itches. She's angry when I complain. You stupid baby scab, you itch me so! The edge lifted, a little more. MAMA, I'M BLEEDING. I'M GETTING BLOOD ON THE SHEET! She told me to go down by myself and get a Band-aid. It hurts me. MAAA.

(Strong)

You'll wake the baby, she said.

She's in the hallway turning out the light. She's coming in to see me

(excited, then not)

to take the book out from under my pillow. *Tom Swift and the Visitor from Planet X*, the third reading. She didn't reach into the pillow case—I've got *Tom Swift in the Cave of Nuclear Fire* there. I stick *Tom Swift and the Flying Lab* at my feet where the blanket is folded. I took my brother's two Tom Swift books and put them in my bookcase, *Tom Swift and the Giant Robot* and *Tom Swift and the Rocket Ship*. He didn't notice yet. I won't give them back.

(Strong)

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Tom Swift is mine!
Maaa—Goodnight! Goodnight, Ma! She says Goodnight so angry as if she's throwing me away into the night.

ii

I stand here looking at my girl.

The sun is hot. My eyebrows, the hair on my legs are bleached against my tan. Her skin is white, her legs like pale roots under the water. Don't you ever go out in the sun? I ask her. She reaches down, fills her palm with water from the fountain, and then lets it drip, drip on my wrist. She doesn't answer half my questions. She sits on the edge of the fountain.

Watch me make a stone skip! I tell her. I pick up a flat stone. I have chosen it carefully. She watches the water, waiting. I twirl the stone. It sinks. What could have happened? I ask her. She doesn't answer. I take another stone like it. I weigh it before her. It was too heavy, I explain, that was the trouble. I'll make another stone skip, I said, skip and skip, like a rabbit. I take my hand and show her where. I'll make it in a straight line, this side of the lily pad and the rocks. I throw the stone. IT SKIPS. But only once. She looks up at me and smiles.
(Awe)
The sun comes from her eyes, this time, and burns me. She's a little bit proud of me.

"What are you doing?" she asks the gardner in the park.

"Raking up the weeds and planting myrtle, ma'am," he tells her, falling in love too.

"Does the myrtle flower?" she asks him.

He puts down his rake and comes over to her. He's taller than she is. He's taller than I am.

"Little blue flowers in the spring," he tells her, "like the color of your blouse."

She has beat my skipping stone and won another game.

Let's race through the park, I say, hurriedly, and take her arm. She pulls loose and won't let me give her a head start. We are running to a tree, past the picnic tables and the Good Humor truck. I'm running hard, but I haven't beat her yet. MY SANDAL STRAP TEARS! OH, GOD! It's cheating; it's unfair; she's winning and it's not fair.

She doesn't stop but runs past the Good Humor man, a Mexican man who smiles at her. She reaches the tree. I see her blue blouse puffed with her breathing, a flag against the tree. She waits for me as I
(slowly)
limp towards her.

iii

Dear Love,
I see pigeons in front of the bakery eating their morning sweet rolls. The back door has just closed hard after you, and you've gone out of sight through the alley. I can't chase you. I respect your leaving.
(Sharp intake of breath)
Car brakes.
(Listens a moment, satisfied nothing has happened)
Did you startle the motorist with your blind crossing of the street?
The pigeons have left the cinnamon and icing to the ants. They're fluttering like frightened hands in the air, with the noise.
The pigeons.
You were angry with them every day these past months, seeing them eating day-old cake. You'd run across the street and stamp at them, "Leave it alone."

Then you'd turn to me and say, "Why should they eat cake when we're so poor?"

There we differed.
(Reasonable.)

I would count for you, simply, like a bedtime story, our blessings. First, I reminded you, we live near the library. You were unmoved. With its bibliographies, its bibliographies of bibliographies, I teased. No interest. Then, I would tell you gently, I have my old portable typewriter, and, as long as we have that, we have our sanity. *And* modern literature.
(Pleading)

You loved my stories *first* and me *after*. You ASKED to meet me. You must have wanted to be Mrs. Book Jacket. But, in these months, if you heard me typing you would start to hum or turn the sink water and clatter dishes.

I tried to type at night. In your sleep first I'd hear, "Shh! Shhh." Then, "Stop it. Leave me alone!" I wasn't typing insults. If I wrote on the week-end, you'd say, pulling on white gloves, "Don't violate the Sabbath."

Darling, I said, and I was careful not to tear (as in cry), "If I don't write, there is nothing to me. Between each story I forget myself. If I'm doing an extended piece, then from out there I have a life line back to shore. I sink between stories. I hear the old questions coming back, from my parents, my counsellors, 'What will you be when you grow up?' If you want me grown up, I would say to you, then let me go into the sound of the typewriter. Let me leave you a little each day. I *will* come back even if the milk is stale in the refrigerator and we're out of sugar.
(Shouting)

You married a writer, do you hear me?
(Whispers)

I haven't typed in weeks now. I sit at the desk, in defiance, and play with the lock on the portable case. No reason to open it. You shouted the selfishness out of me. Without selfishness, there's no writing.
(Head in arms, resting from the passion)

I pray for other sounds now to replace you, street sounds, not house sounds. The pigeons are bold; they've flown back to the sidewalk from the ledge above the bakery window. A little boy is playing with an old tire. The garbage collectors are here.
(Intense.)

My love, if you hadn't gone, I, in order to live, would, in time, have written nasty stories about you. I would have caricatured you. I WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU....

iv

I was looking at her in the supermarket line today. The sun through those big plate windows shone on her and did her no harm. Her skin is smooth, her figure is good, and I'd like to grab her still if she'd let me. Friends of hers who

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haven't met me ask, when they see us together, "Is that your father?" I'm only seven years older than she, but I look worried.

I have a friend. He is Mr. Sparrow, a handsome man in retirement, who reads to the blind students of the university. He is a fine voice of a man.

"To what do you attribute your handsome appearance, Mr. Sparrow?" I ask him.

"To my wife," he always says, "Better than I ever deserved."

I owe my worry to my wife.

We walked home from the supermarket. I carried the canned goods on Special. She carried a bag of nectarines.

"Get some bing cherries," I had nudged her in Produce. "Some of those beautiful, dark cherries."

I like sweet things now as much as I did when I was a child.

"Cherries?" said my wife, with the boy weighing the nectarines and listening to every word. "CHERRIES! FLIES ALL OVER THE CHERRIES. LOOK AT THE FLIES EATING THE CHERRIES. WILL YOU JUST LOOK AT THOSE BLACK FLIES CRAWLING OVER THE CHERRIES? It's disgusting that they let the produce become diseased. *No cherries*!"

"I want some cherries," I told my wife while we were waiting with our shopping carts. "Aw c'mon, let me have just a pound. It won't hurt you. I pay the bills."

I said this while the cashier totaled the last of the bill. My wife pushed me through the lane with the metal basket and took all the Gold Bell stamps for herself.

At night I like her to put her hand on my face and let me breathe into her palm. But she has stopped doing that since I was sick last year. She fed me with a spoon, then, hot tea, a little at a time.

"Sing to me," I asked her.

She said, "Aren't you foolish, old man? You know I can't carry a tune. It was my brother Harry who could carry a tune."

I didn't ask her to carry a tune. I asked her to sing to me, a lullaby.

I'm home every day now, and she doesn't know what to do with me.

"A man home every day for lunch," she says. "It's a nightmare!"

She undresses in the dark now and doesn't let me see her. I walk by myself to the park to sit on a bench and look at the pretty girls. When I see one going by I hold out my arms to embrace her and say,

"Come here, pretty girl. Come here. What a pretty girl."

But they don't come to see me anymore.

I buy candy with my allowance. I hide the candy under my pillow, a new kind for myself each night. Black Crows tonight. Mary Janes last night. Planters Peanuts Bar, the fifteen cents size, planned for tomorrow night.

I wait each night for her to fall asleep first. A woman should go first, through the doorway, into cars, to sleep.

"Good night, mother," I call to her in the other bed. "Mother, good night."

"DON'T CALL ME MOTHER," she answers. □

PAUL HUNTER

PUT YOUR WHOLE SELF IN AND SHAKE IT ALL ABOUT

Driving her to an abortion
I find two splinters in pain.
My left hand, it can wait, yet
they begin hurting like kids

you mention eating around,
or dentists, or zoo rides,
kids you drive blocks to avoid
showing the circus is down,

children swept under the skin—
dull, glancing blows you've forgotten.
I turn to her for a pin
and she draws one from about her

to ease the paw of the lion.

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A STORY BY JAMES OLIVER, JR.

ANY RECOLLECTION

ON HER STAIRS
On her morning descent she remembers the white envelope with the tree seedling in the corner.

IN HER LIVING ROOM
Passing through the long end of her living room she avoids looking toward her nest of teak tables.

IN HER KITCHEN
When the coffee pot is plugged she opens the refrigerator and removes one fruity Danish with tongs. She places it in the middle of a Teflon pan and with tongs places the pan and the Danish in the oven to warm. Her table is set for one. The sun is on her back warming her skin and her housecoat's puff ruffles. She unfolds her paper. With one fine hand clutching the center rib she scans the sheets. When her coffee is ready she transfers with tongs the warm sugar Danish from its pan to a china plate scrolled in gold, pours her coffee, and at her table enjoys the buttering of her bun, enjoys the filling of its crevices with melting butterfat, enjoys especially her first sweet dripping bite and the licking of her fine-crumbed fingertips. She adds nothing to her coffee. She likes her amber coffee acrid. Done with her morning meal of sweets and bitters she drums her nails on the sun-warmed linen. The fire of her diamond flies. She remembers Martin. Late, unlamented, not missed.

> Too old to be my first. Too old to be my last. Yes, like the title of a song. How would it go?

AT HER DESK
She sits at her desk which used to be Martin's, which is walnut and commodious and bare except for notepads in a pile and an ancient photograph of children in grass. She chooses a ball pen from a drawer. It writes black and does not clot. On a pad she writes

Tuesday June 5

She likes to feel the tip of her pen glide into and across a thick pad. As her pads become thin she throws them in the trash because there is no pleasure in writing on them. She writes

1.

She sighs. She writes

2. Gazebo
3. Fertilize A.
4. Sunbathe
5. Dessert for cards.

Her pen tip hovers over number 1. She sighs. She writes

Read the letter

She tears the list from the pad.

NEAR HER NEST OF TABLES
She thinks the letter lying on the highest of the nest of tables stands out like an ulcer on a baby's cheek. It is a humiliation to her. It reminds her that she is not strong. She holds her hand over the letter with her fingers together

---

JAMES OLIVER, JR. lives in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. This is his first published story.

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in the shape of a star. She spreads her fingers very quickly.

Poof! Waning powers.

ON HER TERRACE
She sees Claude in a rose bed. She calls to him. He pretends not to hear. She calls again. He pauses at his digging. She asks him to hose the gazebo. He shields his eyes with his hand. She sees him squinting. She is sure his lips are moving in the shadow under his hand. He resumes his digging.

IN HER KITCHEN
She removes the cap from a bottle of fish emulsion. She inhales. Her nostrils dilate. She likes the odor of fish emulsion; it evokes pleasures she has put away. She pours fish emulsion in a plastic pitcher. She pours lukewarm water in the pitcher. She pours the murky mixture on Asparagus sprengeri which grows in wild abandon near the door.
She pours a cup of coffee and sits with it by a window overlooking the gardens. Claude turns the soil near the rose roots.

Surly man.

She has found snowdrops on her milk box. Unmentionable tokens. A breaking of roles. She thinks that if she asked him in for a cup of coffee he would blanch and bring up scales or spider mites.

NEAR HER NEST OF TABLES
She sits in an upholstered chair. She imagines a cheerful waiting room, a cheerful nurse with his hand on the shoulder of a cheerless man.

I didn't ask for this. I would rather not have it.
Why do you write? Because I write? I put you on my list. Number 1 on my list, then number 2 or 3. I have good intentions giving you first priority on a list of a woman's so important things to do. What can I do with your scrawly writing that makes me feel so bad?

When I count to three I'll read it.

When a yellow car goes by I'll read it.

my leg doesnt hurt anymore except at night the stump is ugly why dont you write why dont you answer Luke McIntyre

Why don't I write?
Why do you forget my letters? Are my letters so dull, so insipid that you quick stuff them in your pockets or a can half-read? And your last name. That is the worst, worse than your stump of a leg. Makes my chest heave.

Dear Mrs. Walleck,
Luke has been sleeping better for the past few weeks and seems in general somewhat more relaxed. His letter to you is particularly significant. The handwriting is legible and, as you have no doubt noticed, this is the first letter to which he has signed his real name.
Though he claims to feel less pain, his fantasy of a missing leg still preoccupies him and, quite frankly, puzzles me. He will not discuss the leg specifically in our sessions. He alludes to, but also will not discuss, an incident involving the two of you at a fair or a circus. If you have any recollection of such an incident, I would be most interested in hearing from you about it.
Yours truly,
John L. Bartell, M.D.

A fair? A circus? Life is a circus.

She looks out a window at her rolling front lawn.

Dear Dr. Bartell, I need to know about his name. Why sign his last name to me as if we had never met? As if forty-how-many years were a figment of *my* imagination. That's no improvement over scribble, over paper crumpled and recrumpled till it's soft almost like facial tissue.

IN HER ROOM
She throws her ruffled housecoat on her bed. She dresses in yellow shorts and blouse and a green scarf to hold her hair behind her ears. The hairs which remain in fluffs between her ears and cheeks are mostly gray. The skin of her hands is unflawed. The skin of her face does not tell all her years.

Dear Dr. Bartell, A fair? A circus? When I was in Holland I was propositioned by an acrobat who promised to titillate me as I had not been titillated before. He was wrong. In New Orleans I was one of a horrified crowd who witnessed the crushing of a young girl's face by an elephant's hoof.

IN HER KITCHEN
She stirs a mixture of sugar and rum in a pan on a stove lid. She lifts her wooden spoon and watches the liquid run in granulated waves down the bowl of the spoon.

I could send you color pictures of Rum Chocolate Mousse with my letters. Would that make us more familiar? Would you leave off the McIntyre for a Rum Chocolate Mousse? Remember me and delicious mousses you've had at my table?

She pushes chocolate squares with a spoon around the bottom of a pan.

Dear Dr. Bartell, I went to a carnival here in our town with my husband five years ago, six years ago, I'm not sure. He was forbidden sugar. He bought an apple from a candy-apple stand. Insisted on one without the coating. Complained that the apple was pithy. Made a scene.

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She beats egg whites with a wire whip in a copper bowl.

Today I had the Daley sisters and Dolly Stapelton for cards. We are all spinsters and widows. No men in the centers of our lives. All my friends ask about you.

Her arm is tired.

How is your brother, Alice? Much better. His stump is less painful.

How is Luke doing? He signed his own name to a legible letter. His full name to me.

ON HER TERRACE
She lies on a lounge in the sun. Her nose shines from lotion. Small movements show on her eyelids.

Dear Dr. Bartell, A circus?

Dear Dr. Bartell, The room of our house used for a nursery was decorated with painted scenes. Clowns with balloons bowing to each other. Deep bows from the waist.

Dear Dr. Bartell, There was an amusement park on the outskirts of town. For a nickle you could turn a crank and see a woman strip to her black panties.

IN HER KITCHEN
She pours ice water from a refrigerated jug. She closes her eyes as she drinks.

IN HER ROOM
She opens her French doors. She stands in the shadow of the eaves. Below her she sees the slate roof of her gazebo, sees the water-wet lattice in the sun and beside her garage through the spattered glass of her greenhouse, sees a figure moving among the phalaenopsis.

Dear Dr. Bartell, We had happy childhoods. We lacked nothing. Our parents would have given us the moon if we had asked. One night on a porch I believe I was offered the moon.

IN HER BATHROOM
She takes off her clothes. She puts them in her hamper. She stands in the warm spray of her shower.

Who am I that you sign your last name? I'm your sister. I'm Alice. We lived in the house on Mount Linden Road. For years.

She makes the water warmer. She soaps her body. She examines her breasts for lumps.

IN HER ROOM
She lies on the bed which she once shared with Martin, which has wood that is close-grained and waxed.

Dear Dr. Bartell, Where does he think his leg is? I don't understand how a man does not believe in his leg when it's right there.

AT HER DESK
She sits at her desk with her arms on the arms of her chair.

Dear Dr. Bartell, What can I say to him? Can I mention his leg? Say I'm delighted his stump is less painful? Sign my last name for revenge?

She looks at the photograph of four children standing in grass. They are wearing white stockings and high tie-up shoes.

Dear Dr. Bartell, We had happy childhoods. I could show you a picture. Whole albums of pictures.

She rubs the underside of her wrist.

A fair?

Dear Dr. Bartell, I've ridden the Ferris Wheel high above the Atlantic with a man I met on the beach.

She takes stationery from a drawer and a piece of smooth cardboard to put under it. She worries the end of her black ball pen.

Dear Dr. Bartell, I've written more letters than I can remember. Got back letters I couldn't read. Signed with names I couldn't read. Scrawl on crumpled-up paper.

She writes

Tuesday June 5

Dear Dr. Bartell,
I have tried to recall

She stares at the words. She tears the page in small pieces. She writes

Tuesday June 5

Dear Dr. Bartell,
Your recent letter

ON HER TERRACE
She lays a last plate on her linen, adjusts the position of a spoon.

Dear Dr. Bartell, Everything blends. The china, the flowers, the linen. My friends will all rave.

She leans with her hands on the back of a chair.

Dear Dr. Bartell, I have tried to recall □

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JONATHAN HOLDEN

THE SUMMER OF SNAKES

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The summer I turned ten was the summer of snakes.
Fearless, I stalked the Walters' field
where blacksnakes sunbathed on the hot, stone
foundation of the burned-down barn.
All summer in the grass I found them dead.
I wrapped their dry, flaked lengths around my neck,
whipped them through the air like blacksnake whips.
Once I coiled a dead one, propped its head upon a forked
stick for Mrs. Emory to see when she came to give us
corn. She didn't scream. She turned white and made
gagging noises. Later, my mother lectured me.
"Mrs. Emory," she said, "is scared of snakes."

All summer long the snakes stretched out to dry.
One snake made his last mistake by
stretching out on the road in front of Mrs.
Cissel's house. Mrs. Cissel had a baby. She lived
alone because Mr. Cissel had re-enlisted to fight
in the Korean War. He'd left her with a loaded thirty-eight.
Her hair was honey streaked with heavy cream.
Seeing the snake, I made my bike's brakes squeak,
then heard a clink—the milkman on Mrs. Cissel's
steps clinking bottles as he climbed into his truck.
Worriedly, Mrs. Cissel smiled. They, too,
had seen the snake. Carefully, roaring his engine,
blossoming blue smoke, the milkman backed his truck,
aimed it at the sleeping snake, then lurched, bumped
over it hurriedly as if afraid it would bite, screech-braked.
Panting, the milkman chewed his gum importantly, his face
set like St. George. The snake was squished! In awed
approval, Mrs. Cissel gawked. Again the milkman backed,
lurched, again screech-braked, then revved. Grim,
without a backward glance or thanks he roared away.
I hated him.

I found fewer and fewer snakes after that. Two
weeks before school opened, the workmen came to fix
the road. I watched the smoking tar-truck creep along;
it sounded like a shower. Then the dump-trucks blundered
by with sizzling gravel. And last the men, red-
faced and shiny, working rakes. I envied them
until they found the snakes—a whole nest
in the pipe by MacKenzies'. All that day, bolstered
by cold beer, and with a savage, messianic zeal
they dragged floundering blacksnake after floundering
blacksnake from that pipe with the handles of their
rakes, slung the frightened snakes down and crushed
them with rocks until there were no more. Then,
tired but satisfied, they finished up the road.

Since that summer, there have been no more blacksnakes
in Walters' field.

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T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE has taught high school in Garrison, N. Y. This is his first published short story.

A STORY BY T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE

THE OD & HEPATITIS RR OR BUST

The field high with brittle, yellow weed, flattened in bursts of wind, sprouting green below, the scent of the new season on the still-chill wind and in the warmth of the sun. The trees, in a crowd around the field, wave their tiny new fingers: flecked green with buds against the big black of the bark, like a palsied man and his shrunken limbs.

Mike bends, shirtless, to rip a board up from the rusted nails. The lats stand out like wings and the veins swell in the biceps. The board wrenches free and he falls back a few steps, then regains his balance, fills his chest with air and stands erect. He is not cold. He tosses the plank with the others in a jagged pile of grey and splinters. The wind whips his long hair back and out from his head as he bends for another. He looks like a diver, plying a wreck, the current heavy and deep. Then from the trees comes the crack of splintering wood; a tree splitting, whistling down, pummeling the earth—he can feel the tremor in his feet. Half the tree still stands, the green pods swaying in the wind. The trunk on the ground has no buds: It is already decayed: the split wood reveals the tracks of insects bored into the limbs.

*

The four stumble around in a slow-motion, stone-eyed parody of panic:

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The Ice! Get the Ice!
Walk him around!
Slap him, slap the shit out of him!
Get him out of here! If he dies—
Shut up!
Put ice in the tub for christsake—throw him in the tub!
Get Him Out Of Here!

*

The cats scratch and tear about on the rug, the music is too loud, the bushes outside are turning green and the alligators sleep in the sun through the open window. Outside, the sound of hammering: powerful and purposeful.

*

Remember when he built that coop for the chicks and the baby ducks?

Oh, yeah, yeah. And he made a little pond for the ducks too, didn't he?

They were so cute and helpless: Chris says. She is remembering, her mouth a tight line.

And didn't he have a pet alligator?

Two of them.

I only saw one.

He bought another one after you left. He used to feed them by hand—fish that he raised himself. I think they were guppies. And hamburger... He was almost like a veterinarian, you know?

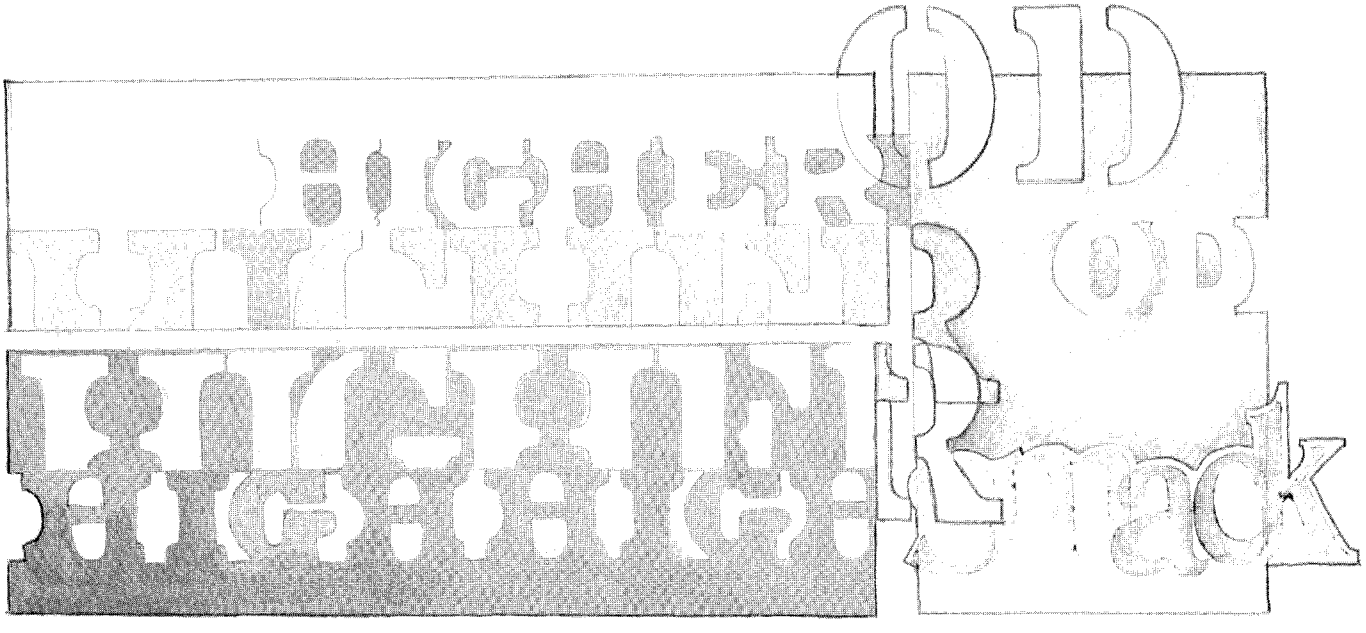
*

Mike looks at you. He squints, the eyelids flutter, close. They open suddenly and they're white! The eyeballs are drowning.

I got one ambition, man... I wanna MAKE IT and then I can be high as I want. I'd buy a pound—a whole fucking beautiful pound—and uncut: pure dope. These bags you cop on the corner, they're all cut, you know? You get just one tiny grain of smack and the rest is powdered milk. Can you imagine that? You get so beautiful, so fucked up on two bags of that shit and all you're getting is two grains, two little grains! But a pound of pure dope!... Then it's all right—it's not being a junkie—cause then you're a rich man and you can cop all the scag you want.

*

Mike nods in the corner. There is a shadow there, cast by the bushes soaking in the dying sun. His mouth is open and a spider spindle of saliva sticks first to his chin, then slides to his chest. In the floor, a tremor: full volume, the bass beats dully with his heart, swells his veins. He plays along in his mind, the fingers moving vaguely in his lap. Then the head snaps up, and the eyes, slit like a reptile's, focus in grey on a room shot in black and white. The eyes close, the head, on a puppet string, drops. And then startled by a frenetic guitar run, the eyes open again. The music comes from everywhere, comes from nowhere; the canvas over the speakers billows faintly with each insistent beat. Mike rises slowly and walks to the kitchen cubicle. He takes the bloody waxed paper from the refrigerator, unwraps the chopped meat. He is feeling the music, and he moves with it, and he feels good, towering: his eyes close and he stands for a long moment, his palm mashing the raw meat. He starts. And takes the meat back into the main room. The sun has gone and the room is nearly dark; the alligator lies quietly in the fetid water. Mike's hand intrudes and the small reptile is lifted, thrashing its tail as the big fingers force the meat down its throat. The alligator spits and then scratches at the hand with its rear



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legs, as if trying to rid itself of a collar. The feeding completed, Mike bends to carefully release it, snapping back his hand as the miniature dragon scrapes angrily around its glass enclosure. Mike pauses, his eyes closed. He feels the music, very loud, rushing up to him from primeval rock huts: and he feels good with it. Then he heads for the bathroom.

*

But what he did to them, that was crazy!

Christine pulls her finger between her bare toes and laughs, looking like a little girl.

I can't understand why he did it—

Neither can I.

After he spent so much time with them—hand feeding the alligators and all. And hauling out those sacks of feed for the chickens and ducks. To kill them like that was crazy.

Christine is silent. Her feet are on the floor, her hands in her lap.

*

A minute sound: tap, tap-tap, tap.

Ow! This fuckin thing is full of burrs. When we gonna get some decent works? It feels like I'm drivin' a fuckin telephone pole in.

It burns in, lifts the flesh as you draw back; the blood, and then you're hit. It's like the train wheels spin furiously, dig against the rails, full steam—but somebody oiled the track and the train doesn't move, just races faster and faster and you feel sweaty and faint your legs are weak all the blood in a bag in your head, it's good dope this time, real good.

Mike! (it's Christine, she's white, the skin is drawn tight over her cheeks like in the films of Birkenau and there are black circles under her eyes) Mike! Mike! It's Sunny, Sunny's OD-ing.

*

We got this new group man—it's dynamite! I'm up front—no more bass—just front man—and this cat Jack on lead and Stokes the drummer and this outasight piano—he used to be with the Dead—

Etc.

*

Sunny! Hey Sunny, come around come around.

Slap him, man, Slap him!

Gimme the ice! Shake your ass Chris!

C'mon Sunny. Come on!

Sunny says: Kkk...KKkkkkkk...kkkkkkkkkkkkhhh

Slap the shit out of him!

Slap. Slap-slap-slap. Sunny's mouth begins to bleed, just a trickle, and red the color of life. Sunny's eyes are open but filmed, like the eyes of old men.

Oh my God what're we gonna do, Mike! Mike! I can't

stand it, let's get him out of here. Mike! Let's get him out of here! He belongs in the hospital, I'm telling you—Mike! What if he dies here? My God, my God...Mike!

Okay, okay! Shut up! Just be cool, he's not gonna die. Just take it easy. You know we can't take him to the hospital. C'mon Dickie, slap him man!

Sunny is in the bathtub. The water is very cold, there is ice in it. His friends are slapping him. Sometimes they take him out of the tub and walk him around the room, Sunny vaguely assenting, the skin on the bridges of his feet worn raw from dragging.

Sunny is saying: Kkkkkkkhh. And: kkkkkkkkkkkhhhh.

*

At a table in the back, where it's dark, Mike is talking to a friend.

Hey, I hear you had a hassle with Sunny the other night.

Yeah. I was scared shitless, man. That was some dope. I did as much as him, man, but he was dead—that mother was dead. I was shaking, man, you know? We took him to the hospital finally. We dumped him in a chair in the waiting room and then we ran. We couldn't take the chance of questions—we might of got busted.

Yeah, yeah. So he's all right?

Uh-huh. They brought him around and then they let him go. He was back late that night. I just hope nobody followed him.

Hey Mike?

Yeah?

You got any smack?

Sure, I'll do you some. How much bread you got?

*

And the blood comes up, swirled in the tube red like a chicken heart. You're sweaty and you've got a light forehead and you walk like a crippled duck. You can't stand up, you feel dizzy you feel like shit you feel like god and

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then you go into a nod. Like Sleepy, that seven dwarf cat, and you scratch your nose—just the inside, right at the tip and you scratch it good maybe it bleeds and then you nod and then you feel good and then you nod and look at your arm the veins like pregnant pythons strangling your arm and you feel like fucking Tarzan and then you nod, nod.

*

You gotta hear this new song, man. I call it "The OD and Hepatitis Railroad or Bust." Dig the title? It's funny, huh? Now you tell me if the repeat chords get monotonous. I want them to be monotonous, you know—like flying, like drifting in a big circle. See, I'm after this effect—

*

There is a black cloud sitting in a tree over the cottage. Strangely there is no music: a silence curls its legs up and goes to sleep. One becomes aware for the first time of the smaller sounds: crowcall a harsh *w* in the leaves, bees singing sewing machine songs, a nameless and furtive sound of digging. The soft earth is full of tunnels and burrows, moles and mice. Digging in the dark: tiny fingers scratching in the blood-soaked earth.

Mike steps out, the screen door swatting behind him. In his hands are alligators, their feet wild, flying in the air. They are set down, released. They run a few steps, stumble, their necks joggle, side to side, like a toy on a spring. They appraise the deep grass warily—slit eyes and the contact lenses they wear underwater. Then the breast-stroke through the grass, clumsy and wide-legged.

In his hand, darts. From the dart board inside. Heavy, sharp, satisfying. The fingers release one—and there it is: in the ground, buried to the shaft. Then another. The ground snatches it from his hand. The alligators scramble like babies learning to walk. The darts go to the ground, points injecting the earth and then suddenly a dart pierces the rippled leather of an alligator. It is pinned to the ground, snapping at the hot mystery in its back. And then Mike is rifling them and they shoot into the earth on either side, like knives thrown at the spinning woman in the circus. Then one pins the skull, severs the bulb of a brain: a spot of red appears. And then the other, still unaware, until it too is transfixed. For a long while Mike bends over them, dropping the wet red needles into the mashed bodies.

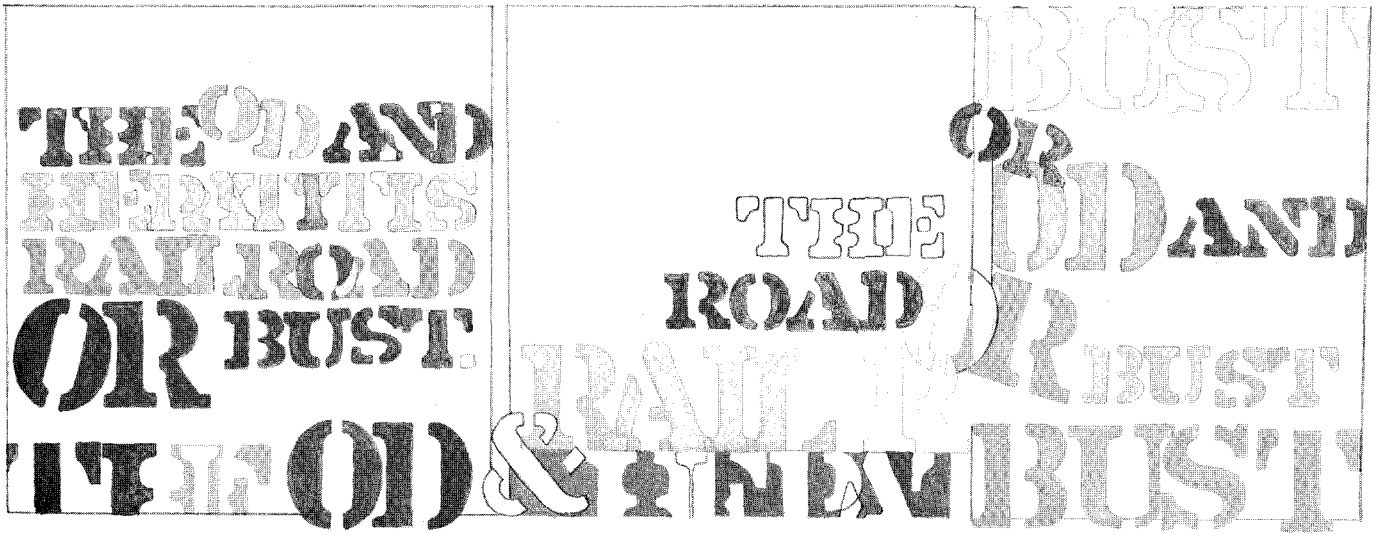
Then: Mike rattles through the low branches to the henhouse. There he catches a chicken, fixes its neck over his knee and with a deliberate, dull stroke, cuts off its head. The parts tremble; his pants absorb the warmth of the blood. Each chicken, each duck, is executed.

*

You know I'm a junkie, man. I mean I'm doing five bags a day. Before, I used to get strung out once in a while and then maybe I'd come down for a couple days, but now...I ripped off this gas station, you know, cause Chris and me we need the bread and we haven't played no dates lately. Chris got the guy's attention and I just walked in and took the money out of the box... But we're going on the road soon, did you know that? That's what this new agent we got says. He's big and he's gonna back us—new equipment, the works. He's got to, you know? It's all I got: I write songs and play...This is nowhere—everybody's OD-ing or going in with hepatitis or getting busted—that's all there is. But this new group is dynamite; we're gonna make it and then I'll have a mountain of scag... There's nothing else I want to do—just play, that's all. Play and be high. Cause I look so good on stage, you know? And that feeling I get, the Amp way up—it's like I'm floating.

*

Mike sits in the field against the channelled and rotted trunk. His eyes are closed, his chin rests on his chest, his breathing is slow. The mosquitos circle, whining in the pale light, looking for soft tissue to wet their tiny syringes.



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GREG KUZMA

POEM

I know what you are thinking you
are thinking I am lucky so far
I have gotten this far I am what
one might call one of the lucky ones
through four lines with nothing
happening, the poem undeclared,
the weather picture entirely ignored
you are saying, see he is trying
to make a poem without giving in
to anything, no one getting kissed
to death, no one failing, no
gorilla escaping its cage to be hunted down, and see how far
already I have come

and into the second stanza and
you are still with me, perhaps there
is some kinship between us you from
your small town me from my small
town you with your poems me with
mine, and perhaps you are saying
now it is beginning to dawn on
you what sort of trickery this is

his poems disclose themselves gradually
as dawn comes to the Plains States
he has all but adopted, or that his
love for words carries him off the
page then back again, the real poem
taking place somewhere else but is
almost a kind of secret between him
and the reader

how we encourage each other how we
complement each other the poem my
mirror when I turn to it and yours
when you do

how we depend on it to discover the common
ambition we keep from each other
through the separate arguments of our
daily lives. Must I say it did I
come to say it here is there no other
poem I can delay this to this that

you must already know how I aspire
to enter your life and alter it.
Must you go on reading off the page
back into your life and back into
your own poems unchanged as I am
through this, unredeemed?

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TRAVEL?

Gerald Weales

My Last Travel Article

This is going to be a travel article. I could have used a more alluring opening ("Abyssinia in April . . ."), but there is no point in shilling for a show that I am not really trying to sell. The blunt beginning is a warning to any reader who shares my impatience with all travel writing: move on to something else in the magazine.

No, not all travel writing. Those curious—in both senses of the word—nineteenth-century Englishmen who explored exotic cultures (Mrs. Trollope visiting the United States, for instance) are still a delight to read and so are their true descendants—Graham Greene, say, trekking the West African backlands forty years ago. The difficulty now is that there is almost no place in the world where one can go as a visitor, as an inquisitive but sympathetic outsider. The traveler is necessarily a tourist these days, or a temporary resident, which means a man trying desperately not to be taken for a tourist. What Baedeker began all those years ago, a minute account of which street to go down in Catania to find what lava-built horse trough, is big business now, and it is impossible to turn any corner in any city without finding Michelin, Fielding, and half a hundred other guides pointing toward a collapsing church and clocking its age, weight, and potential market value. All this for five dollars a day! What, then, is there for Mrs. Trollope to say that she couldn't put on a postcard. "Dear Anthony: This is a picture of our hotel. The X marks my room. You would be amused by Cincinnati. Be a good boy. Love. Mother."

She could become a tout and that, willy-nilly, is what travel writers have become. There are three basic strains. The first—the professional pimp—need not detain us long. He is the gent—often called the "travel editor"—who grinds out a column every week or month, depending on what publication he works for. He seems never to run into uncomfortable hotels, lousy food, bad weather, unpicturesque views, as the rest of us do, and if Thumper's mother in *Bambi* had not taught me to say only nice things about people, I might publicly suspect that he had close friendships at the air lines, in hotel chains, with travel agents. In any case, his is a luxury existence and most of us do not travel that way. I was walking through a handsome English garden with two young friends the other day. "What's that?" she asked, pointing to a deliquescent fungus crawling over a stout English rock. "I don't know," he answered, "but I think we had the same thing on the wall of our hotel in Istanbul." Richard Joseph and Horace Sutton do not stay at that hotel.

The other two kinds of travel writing are closely allied. In the one, the author turns what he hopes is a fresh eye on a standard attraction—a city, a landmark, a monument that has played host to day-trippers for years. In the other, the author, crowing with delight, offers to share a jewel-like discovery with his readers—a restaurant, a country inn, a deserted beach, not yet spoiled by the trampling feet of tourists. Of course, if the article is beguiling enough, the readers immediately become tourists, strap on their credit cards and board the next bus, train, plane for the last pure retreat of the man of simple pleasures. As likely as not, however, when the readers-cum-tourists arrive they find the restaurant booked, the inn full, the beach littered, for the discoverer, having happened on the place in an odd moment and having been too excited to do any research, will not know that his discovery is listed in four or five travel guides where, under the approving stars, it is listed as quiet, unspoiled, sylvan.

Take the Halepi, for example. A few years ago I flew into London, settled into a decrepit hotel in the Bayswater area, and, my stomach not yet adjusted to the change in time, set out in mid-afternoon to find something to eat. The Halepi was dark, deserted, oddly inviting, a quiet sanctuary in a noisy city; so I went in and had one of the best meals I have ever stumbled on in my travels. As I toyed with my coffee and pushed away the proffered Turkish delight, I felt an affectionate pity for the friendly Cypriotes who ran the place. So much quality, so much enthusiasm, so much warmth, and no customers. Two days later, I returned to the Halepi early in the evening and found it packed to the doors, people spilling out into the street. I never found out whether it was a guide to good eating or simple word-of-mouth that filled the place, but the restaurant was jammed every day from six in the evening until two in the morning. So much for the discovery.

Of course, I have made genuine discoveries. I found a perfect butterscotch pie in a Mexican restaurant in Fort Gardner, Colorado. I never wrote it up for the *Times* or anything, but I was once tempted to when a visiting Englishman, writing a travel piece for *The Reporter*, cited Fort Gardner as a typical American town without decent food. I decided, finally, that Fort Gardner and its butterscotch pie did not really need my defense and, since it was too late to do the Englishman any good, I let it pass. Besides, there is a real danger in pointing an eager finger at a good restaurant. It may change before the reader can get to the end of the finger. When I was a student at Columbia in the late 1940s, living on my slim GI benefits, I used

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to eat at a little restaurant on Morningside which had nothing to recommend it except the low prices. The food was standard American, from thin soup to powdered pudding, and my friends and I were regularly startled when, looking up from our mashed potatoes, we saw a cluster of well-dressed Japanese, cameras across their chests, staring in pained disbelief at our plates. We finally found out that an old travel guide (for all I know, one prepared in Tokyo in the event that the Japanese won the war and had to occupy New York) had listed a Japanese restaurant at that address. Even if that Mexican restaurant is still flourishing in Fort Gardner and even if butterscotch pie is still on the menu, I do not advise a charter flight to the spot because no one can predict when the regular cook will be sick, when the oven will quit working, when they will run out of brown sugar.

I don't know why I am going on about discoveries. If I actually came across something good in a town I thought I would be in again, I wouldn't write about it at all. You, gentle reader, and your noisy friends, would turn up in hordes and corrupt the place. Besides, I intended this travel article to be the other kind, one of the "fresh eye" variety. But before I can get on to that, I ought to say something about my travel compulsions.

I am one of the world's worst travelers. I seem to be constantly on the move, looking for God knows what and thinking fondly of my backyard in West Philadelphia where I could sit quietly—well, since it is Philadelphia, reasonably quietly—and read or work or watch the English sparrows try to outmaneuver the starlings for the remains of a frozen lazagna. But something nags at me, whispers, how come, at your age, you have never been to Katmandu or Cairo or, even, Amsterdam and Brussels? Now, when I travel for profit rather than pleasure, I usually have a better time. Between chores, I visit zoos and art museums, both of which I like, or wander aimlessly through strange streets or sit for hours in a park or a square watching the world over the edge of the book that I always carry in case I need a defense. But, when I simply go someplace to look at it, I am eaten by the same compulsion that forced me out of my backyard in the first place. It is a variation on the one that wracked me as a child—now cured, thank God—the need to read every book in the public library. I am afraid I am going to miss something. Even though most of the things I fail to miss turn out to be eminently missable.

It is at this point that the guidebooks take over. Suppose I pick up a Michelin—for convenience's sake—the street maps, the addresses. It quickly becomes more cross than crutch. It begins to nag at me, to accuse me, to whisper that I really should take every side trip to every obscure town for every unstarred attraction because any of them might turn out to be an exquisite find, not fully appreciated by Michelin, just waiting for my superior eye. As I write this in England, happily on a job and hence freer than I would be if I were free, I have just begun to recover from a ten-day trip to Holland and Belgium. My Michelin falls open and I feel guilty for not having gone to Deventer to see the *Waag* which was "charmingly constructed in 1528" and *De Drie Haringen* which is said to have "a beautiful facade of 1575" and the *Grote Kerk*, "a vast edifice . . . constructed in the style Gothic." (The Benelux Michelin, you will have guessed, is not available in English.) Tourist centers are even more frightening than guidebooks because, with specialized rows to hoe, they comb the area, the city, the block even, in search of artifacts that can be called to the visitor's attention. Only last summer, trapped by a tourist throwaway, I forced a contributing editor of this journal to accompany me on a walking tour of Quebec City. After a day and a half, in the rain, she revolted and we took shelter, leaving a statue or two unobserved; alas, all that I remember of my visit to Quebec City is that the porridge in the Chateau was excellent.

But it was Benelux to which I intended to bring my "fresh eye" when I sat down at the typewriter. Through the fatigue and pressure of seeing as much as I could and the guilt at not seeing everything else, a few things broke loose from the melange of general impressions: the Horta house in Brussels; the modern-art museum in Utrecht; the giraffes in the zoo at Rhenen; a movie house in Amsterdam (a discovery) with a marvelous crocodile-ridden facade; the Hoge Veluwe. If I were going about this travel-writing business properly, I would probably choose the last of these and spin a web of observation about it. After all, there is something tantalizing about a national park, with the usual nature walks and the promise of wild animals, that has yet a major art museum at its heart. Not to say, the largest sculpture garden in the world. I could come to the piece through art because, when I was there, the Kröller-Muller had the visiting Hermitage show from Leningrad sharing wall space with its own Van Goghs. I could come to the piece through nature because I came across a not-very-wild wild boar (she was begging from picnickers) and her melon-striped babies. I could come to the piece through cross-cultural considerations, conjectural ruminations about what it might mean, for art lovers and nature lovers alike, if the Walker Gallery in Minneapolis, say, were moved to Glacier Park. I could . . . . but, for all the delight the Hoge Veluwe gave me, I really have nothing very startling to say about the place.

Besides, I have to admit that nothing in that pleasant day at the Hoge Veluwe could touch five lovely minutes that the Brussels streets gave me. We had just driven into the city and managed to get lost, so we stopped while one of our number went in search of information. As we sat waiting, a little old gentleman came down the street, wheeling a baby buggy decorated with red and blue ribbons. Riding in the buggy was a dog, a mutt for all its aplomb, its attention on an ancient wind-up victrola which sat at the back of the carriage, scratching out its serenade. Just opposite us, the old man stopped and rewound the victrola while the dog watched, patient, content with the service, and then they moved off—man, dog, buggy, victrola—the ribbons lightly fluttering, and disappeared in the crowd. That vision was worth the round trip plane fare to Europe, but how the devil am I going to work it into a travel article? □

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Stephen Minot

THE MEDICAL MONSTER: A Double-Feature in Horror

The American Medical Machine, by Senator Abraham Ribicoff with Paul Danaceau. Saturday Review Press. $6.95

In Critical Condition, The Crisis in America's Health Care, by Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Simon and Schuster. $6.95

It lives in our midst. It springs without warning, destroying innocent victims. It is ruthless, cruel, and insatiable. It is the American medical establishment.

The worst part about this horror story is that it's true. Two nationally known senators have presented indictments, each supported by hearings held from coast to coast. Regardless of literary imperfections, these books are shattering.

What gives them this power is the fact that they deal with a major crisis which has crept up on us unawares. As with the war in Vietnam, we are beginning the debate ten years late.

Here are some highlights from the single decade, 1960-1970:

—Physicians' charges rose 60%

—Hospital charges rose 170%

—Medical schools turned down 100,000 "qualified applicants"

—The number of general practitioners declined—a loss of 15,000 in seven years (1963-70)

—The number of counties without any medical personnel at all increased —including several which have built clinics to attract doctors

—More hospitals than ever before have adopted the policy of turning away uninsured individuals who are too poor to pay deposits in advance

—It is now possible to run up hospital bills in excess of $100,000 in a year and there is no insurance anywhere which will cover such situations

—Hospital representatives now dominate the seventy-four Blue Cross plan boards, thus protecting hospitals, not patients, in the upward spiral of costs

Had enough? Not one of these trends has been reversed. There is every indication that 1973 will be worse. What both authors charge—and document—is that the medical establishment has turned into big business which is increasingly callous toward the needs of its customers, is almost entirely free from controls, and holds a monopoly which allows both inefficiency and limitless increases in cost.

At this point it is customary to say a few kind words about those doctors who are dedicated, who do try to hold costs down, who have chosen to practice where there is a need for medical service, and who don't split fees with surgeons and specialists. As Senator Kennedy wryly says, "Some of my best friends are physicians."

But after reading these two accounts, one has the distinct impression that being a good guy in medicine is somewhat like that one soldier at My Lai who shot his own foot so as to avoid participation. It is good to know that such people exist, but their actions won't and can't ever solve the problem.

In ever increasing numbers, doctors during the sixties have fled poverty areas, both rural and urban. Their action has been dramatic and growing more so in the past decade. In central Harlem, for example, there are now only 150 physicians serving 223,000 people. Yet in Manhattan there are 4,000 physicians on or just off a single avenue—you guessed it: Park. In Chicago there are "more private doctors in a single North Shore medical building than in the entire West Side poverty area of some 300,000 Negroes," Ribicoff reports.

In rural areas and in small towns the situation has deteriorated even more rapidly. Both books document case after case of counties which had at least minimum medical services in 1960 and none by 1970. In some instances clinics built with private contributions in the 1950s and early 1960s have been closed and boarded up for lack of personnel. Small rural hospitals have had to lock off wings and curtail services simply because they have no doctors to staff them. Not even the firm guarantee of from $40,000 to $60,000 a year plus the free use of a new clinic will attract a doctor. That particular offer was mailed to 200 young, dedicated doctors. Only 10 bothered to answer. None took the job. And the shunned area was Phillipsburg, New Jersey—neither black nor a slum.

There are very few professors of English who would not move to Phillipsburg, New Jersey if invited to start (right out of graduate school) at $40,000 a year and scrape along for three years with guaranteed $10,000 increments each year to a guaranteed $60,000. Why did 200 young, dedicated doctors refuse? To what are they so dedicated?

One cannot help *feeling* that the profession has simply sold out to the great American dream of hard, glittering wealth. But the evidence in both these books suggests more complex motivation going back to the medical school experience. In the past 15 years, the specialists have dominated the teaching of medicine. They have had an enormous effect on their students. Increasingly, doctors in family practice are viewed as "medicine's second-class citizens"; speciali-

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zation (particularly but not exclusively surgery) and research are for the talented, the ambitious, and the aggressive. That's where the action is. Who's going to cure cancer or perform the first brain transplant in Phillipsburg, New Jersey?

Hospitals are equally a part of the problem. Protected by major insurance companies like Blue Cross which they now control, they have run up their rates in a way which is hard to believe. It is now possible for a middle class family to be wiped out in a matter of a single year. Both books document injuries and illnesses which have cost from $40,000 to $100,000 *beyond insurance.* Some of the victims have declared bankruptcy, but this is hardly an easy route. It requires giving up one's home and one's car. And for what? In part, the victim is helping to guarantee an average income for all doctors (including interns) of $35,000. He is also supporting hospitals which in many cases are designed to turn a profit for shareholders.

Bad as it is for the middle class, it is worse for the very poor. I confess to being one of those Americans who believed that there were always charity wards open to the poor. This simply isn't true. In case after case, poor people report that they are rejected at the hospital door because they have no insurance and cannot raise the necessary deposit—something between $25 and $50—to be admitted. Both Senators quote persons who have tried repeatedly to enter a spouse or parent in a hospital for treatment and were refused six, seven, or eight times. Some died. Hospitals do not consider themselves responsible.

The situation is aggravated by the medical profession itself. As doctors move out of poor areas and categorically refuse to make house calls (even Senator Hughes could not as Governor of Iowa find a single doctor who would attend a member of his family at night), the hospital emergency room becomes the only recourse. As the pressure mounts, treatment often deteriorates. Like battlefront surgeons, emergency room personnel occasionally send poor patients home even when they are having seizures or, in one case, suffering terribly from broken vertebrae.

As in the case of doctors, there are "good guys" in hospital administration. But like good guys in a bad war, what in hell can they do? The evidence is overwhelming that our system itself is so terrible as to be a national scandal—even in a nation which has been toughened to its own scandalous actions. It is no wonder that Europeans look on us with incredulity, as if we, with all our wealth, were trying to provide fire and police protection through a clutter of private detectives and protection organizations, each of which was determined to make a profit.

These two books are remarkably similar—embarrassingly so on occasion. Each begins with an introduction describing the Senator's personal experiences with doctors and hospitals. Each goes on to document the cost problem with dramatic case histories. The pre-publication selections from Senator Ribicoff's book which are printed elsewhere in this issue of NAR (beginning on page 12) provide a good sample. Then, astonishingly, each book has a chapter entitled "Where Have All the Doctors Gone?" And of course both Senators support similar though by no means identical health insurance plans.

The books also share certain weaknesses. Both rely too heavily on specific case histories. This must have been a strong temptation since both Senators had volumes of testimony at their disposal. It is far quicker to fill a book with transcripts than to argue a case abstractly. Besides, case histories are easier to read and each author is looking for wide audiences. But the serious reader will miss the kind of in-depth analysis which the problem demands.

For example, how did all this develop without our really noticing? Was it accident or are individuals and groups to be held responsible?

Senator Kennedy does not address himself to this at all. Ribicoff and his co-author, Danaceau, provide just enough to make the question a hot one.

It is enormously significant, for example, that the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1932 argued that there were too many doctors and recommended "professional birth control"—a clear case of a guild protecting itself by reducing its own numbers. Two years later the president of the AMA stated that this country could get along with half the number of doctors then in practice. Dutifully, medical schools cut their enrollment by 18%. *And not for twenty years did they return to the 1934 level.*

Knowing this casts a different light on the statistical fact that during the 1960s when hospitals were closing wings and clinics were going unused for lack of doctors, "100,000 qualified applicants" for medical school were turned away.

But while Ribicoff's book provides better insights into historical causes, the work as a whole runs out of steam about two-thirds of the way through. For 167 out of the 206 proof pages, everything moves very well indeed; but once the Senator presents his particular version of national health insurance, the book is really finished. What follows is a lengthy chapter called "Getting It All Together"—which doesn't; and then there is an odd little Epilogue which describes the Mayo Clinic, as a kind of afterthought. One has the impression that the last two chapters are padding; a shame, considering the complexity of the problem and the wealth of his source material.

To some degree we must excuse the literary lapses of political figures—particularly when they are writing about immediate issues while still in office. Even with staff help, the pressure of time is enormous. In this particular case, Senate bills have been entered and the debate is about to begin. These books were designed to initiate that debate, and they will surely do just that.

But another study is needed, one which is not rushed. We need much more information in three areas which these senators skipped over lightly or ignored entirely.

First, much more investigation is needed before we understand how in the course of a decade we could move from a poor medical system to a disastrous one. I am not merely concerned with the prodigious cost increases and the curtailing of services in a time of

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relative prosperity; I am even more deeply concerned with a shift in attitude of an entire profession. Kennedy gives us no historical analysis at all and Ribicoff provides only some chilling hints.

Second, we need to know much more about those many countries which have provided medical security for their citizens in spite of limited resources. Kennedy has included a fascinating chapter about Great Britain, Sweden, and Israel. By comparison, this country is medically barbaric. But he gives us only a Fodor's Guide trip through these countries. And Ribicoff gives us nothing. This is a pity since their success with medical programs provides clear evidence that our own mess is entirely our own doing. We actually spend more per capita for medical service than those who have some form of national health service, yet we have neither security nor equity. It is as if somehow we had stumbled into the 20th century without having eliminated slavery.

Another reason for studying foreign systems in some detail is that they provide a great variety of solutions. The notion of "socialized medicine" is for many Americans a red flag in both senses, but a careful examination of what European nations (and New Zealand, which provided the model for Sweden) have done shows that we are not dealing with a political problem. It is a human problem which simply does not lend itself to "left" and "right." Our present situation is simply *bad*—bad like cancer. But unlike cancer, this disease has known cures.

Finally, we should know far more about the specific proposals for this country's medical crisis. There are many being presented. President Nixon has his own (scarcely more than a standardizing of private insurance rates), and even the AMA has come up with its version of a non-solution. Regardless of merit, all plans deserve study.

Senator Ribicoff does give us details about his own approach—though only his own. It is based in part on the Canadian model: a federally funded national health insurance system which is administered variously by the fifty states. It is a somewhat cautious approach, and one fears for those who live in states whose treatment of the poor and of blacks has been traditionally bad. He argues that each governor would have to defend the system in his own state, creating greater accountability. It is an appealing argument—though the accountability of governors hasn't done as much for the blacks as federal action has in the past 14 years.

Senator Kennedy's proposal is for a federally financed, federally run national health insurance covering all citizens, employed or unemployed, black or white, southern or northern. It would cover all hospital care, all physician's care, all dental care (starting with children through age fifteen and following them up until all are covered). It would cover all lab tests and prescription drugs for the chronically ill. If this strikes anyone as radical, they should be reminded that it is essentially the same system now supported by conservative as well as liberal parties in Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, and Israel, to name just a few. It is a jolt for us only because we have been in the dark for so long.

These books have their weaknesses, but their basic argument for national health security does not. It is tempting to make occasional comparisons between our medical crisis and our foreign policy crisis during the past decade. In both cases, one has the sense of having been naive, too trusting. In both cases there is a sense of national shame. Is it possible that in both cases we will have the humility to admit that we were wrong and the maturity to make major changes in national policy? □

Book Reviews: Some Sour Grapes

While the NAR doesn't intend to abandon entirely the long-established practice of publishing book reviews, we do plan in time to come to print fewer reviews. Some of our reasons for this change in strategy are sound, while others are merely peevish. For one thing, American publishers grind out something on the order of 30,000 books a year—most of them sex manuals—and it is manifestly impossible for a staff consisting of one man to decide which are worth reading, and then find someone willing to write them up. For another, many other magazines do book reviews—weeklies and monthlies among them—and there have been times when we were hard put to justify adding yet another review to the clipping files of an author and his publisher. Thus it is partly in an effort to avoid nervous prostration and redundancy that we are decided to lessen our commitment to the reviewing of books.

The peevish reasons are selfish as well. First, our communications with the publishing houses in New York and Boston have been spotty; while some houses—like Farrar, Straus & Giroux, or Atheneum, or Houghton-Mifflin—have been consistently coöperative, others,—notably Random House—have held themselves at such a level of hauteur *that we've not even been able to pry review copies out of them (in which case, to our everlasting credit, we have paid for the books and given them good press anyway). And then there is the matter of advertising. Advertising does not exactly clutter the NAR, but there are times when—considering our respectable circulation and our modest rates—we wonder why it doesn't, and especially why the major publishers don't contribute to a desirable clutter. No one would suggest that a New York publisher couldn't survive without the quarterlies—all those sex manuals keep the registers ringing—but all of us do serve as a kind of minor league from which the publishers regularly call up new talent.*

To develop new talent for the commercial literary world is one thing—and we exist to accomplish it. To be expected always to supply free advertising in the form of reviews—that's a bit much.

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NAR AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A Position Statement

On Earth Day, 1969, the general public was given a diagnosis that informed people had known of long before: Mother Nature is suffering from hardening of the arteries, or perhaps terminal cancer. Promptly we called upon our practitioners of nature, the scientists and technologists, who have since been busy debating remedies and even applying a few. Other practitioners from sociology, politics, and economics have also been called in for consultations, considerably broadening our understanding of the illness and suggesting further therapy. The search for causes has so far been confined mostly to the patient's recent history, with emphasis upon industrialization, economic exploitation, and sudden rises in population density as the most likely sources of infection. Many practical-minded people take comfort from their belief that the relatively sudden appearance of these symptoms means that they can be made to disappear just as suddenly. With a bit of creative technology, some new laws, and a few changes in social behavior they expect to cure environmental disease.

Unfortunately, the problem is larger than that. The roots of environmental crisis run deeper into our culture than technology, science, sociology, or politics can reach with their manipulative arms. Attitudes toward nature which have led us to disrupt its processes have been nurtured by religious and philosophical beliefs, literary postures and imagery, esthetic values, and ethical traditions which have persisted in Western culture for several thousand years without being essentially changed by social or scientific modifications. We continue, for instance, to believe that human dignity is somehow affirmed by our capacity to rise above and control natural processes. We think that we are human only to the extent that we can overcome the animals around us and the animal within us. We cannot resist the flattering thought that the world must have been created just to be used by mankind.

The human impact upon natural systems has been guided by such ideas, beliefs, and emotional attitudes toward ourselves and our surroundings. Our most sophisticated technology is unlikely to invent an anti-pollution device which will cleanse our minds of the thoughts and feelings which have led us to environmental disaster.

It is time now for the humanities to accept its share of responsibility for the study of environmental values. Though chemical and surgical means may be available for regulating reproductive rates, their use raises ethical questions which scientists are ill equipped to answer. The desire to preserve "beautiful" environments often leads to absurd arguments as scientists and engineers dispute esthetic problems for which they lack both vocabulary and insight. And as we explore more deeply the implications of oil development, the use of agricultural chemicals, urban pollution, and wildlife and wilderness preservation, it becomes increasingly evident that we cannot hope to solve environmental problems until we understand better how they have grown from our own thoughts and feelings. The humanities—particularly philosophy and literature—can provide measures of depth which have so far been notably lacking in public discussions of the environment.

Environmental knowledge can also contribute importantly to our understanding of art and thought. Ecology has provided new perspectives on problems of form, structure, and relationship which are at least as rich in implications for humanistic studies as psychology and anthropology were half a century ago. Evolutionary and ethological studies of animals have suggested comparative approaches to the study of human ethics, patterns of behavior, and social rituals, and the surface of this enormous area of inquiry has scarcely been scratched. Imagery and metaphors of nature have long characterized human literature and language, but we have never until now been in a good position to correlate these figurative uses of nature with scientific biological knowledge. Finally, since the study of environment is necessarily interdisciplinary, it will require extensive revisions of educational methods and structures as it matures. Should the humanists fail to participate in that restructuring, they will not only be left out of major educational changes but will also miss a rare opportunity to explore the common ground they share with the scientific community.

The North American Review presently appears to be unique among academic journals in its recognition that environmental problems raise intellectual as well as technological and social issues, and that these must be the concern of all thinking people regardless of any affiliation with a particular branch of learning. We hope in the coming months to publish provocative and experimental writing which cuts across the conventional boundaries of science, the humanities, and the arts in search of new insight into the meanings of the natural environment. Perhaps we can review North America and the world remembering that we share the land and sea with many other species of plants and animals. Our distinction as a species is perhaps that we are the only animal to publish journals, and that fact must always remind us of our responsibility for understanding the meaning of our actions and thoughts.

—*Joseph W. Meeker*

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